TENNYSON'S

GARETH AND LYNETTE

Gareth and Lynette

By

Lord Tennyson

WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES BY

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PREFACE.

This edition of *Gareth and Lynette* is intended to be uniform with that of *The Coming of Arthur* and *The Passing of Arthur* by Mr. F J. Rowe of the Presidency College, Calcutta, and I have not thought it necessary to include in it either a general account of Tennyson's poetry or a dissertation on the *Idylls of the King*, except so far as seemed necessary for the due understanding and appreciation of this particular idyll. For the rest I may be permitted to refer to Mr Rowe's Introductions, to which I must also acknowledge obligation for several suggestive remarks. In preparing the Notes I have occasionally found Brightwell's *Concordance to Tennyson* of service, and for etymologies I have constantly given references to Dr. Skeat's *Concise Etymological Dictionary of the English Language*, a book which might with advantage be put into the hands of every student of English. In references to the *Morte Darthur* I have used Strachey's (Globe) edition, 1891, not thinking it necessary to puzzle young students by giving the quotations in the original spelling. Other obligations are acknowledged where they occur.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE *Idylls of the King* should be regarded as one poem, the most important of Tennyson's works. This poem has something of the effect of an Epic, but is not thrown into that form of continuous narrative which belongs to the true Epic, and this difference of treatment is expressed by the title. The word "idyll," which originally means "little picture," from its use by Theocritus and perhaps others of the Greek pastoral poets, came to designate a short picturesque poem dealing with the lives and loves of shepherds, fishermen or common people generally; and a beautiful example of this kind is given by Tennyson in the "small sweet idyl" which occurs in the *Princess*, "Come down, O maid, from yonder mountain height." Tennyson, however, has extended the meaning of the term so as apparently to include under it all picturesque narrative poems of moderate length, whatever their subject, and its use in the title of *Idylls of the King* serves to express the fact that in this work the subject is dealt with in a series of poems each complete in itself, and generally without direct transition of the narrative from one to another, though at the same time there is a regular progress of narrative from the first to the last, as well as a profound unity

conception. Similarly many of the divisions of *In Memoriam* are complete in themselves, while at the same time each has a vital connection with the whole.

The work, however, has grown gradually from the poet's mind, and its unity is probably not the result of a fully preconceived plan, for perhaps no poem was ever published in so fragmentary a manner as this. It may fairly be said that the author began with the end, continued with the beginning, and ended with the middle of the story; and yet, partly from the fact that each idyll is pervaded by the consistent moral ideals of the poet, and partly from the manner in which the new elements have been successively woven in, the poem forms unquestionably an artistic whole.

The portion which first appeared of the *Idylls* was that magnificent fragment called *Morte d'Arthur*, which forms now a part of *The Passing of Arthur*, ll. 170—440. This, which was published in 1842, was introduced then as the eleventh book of a young poet's Epic *King Arthur*, of which all had been destroyed but this. We must not take this literally as implying that Tennyson had himself already written an Epic upon the subject, but it certainly shows that the idea of such an Epic had passed through his mind. After an interval of seventeen years, in the year 1859, were published under the title of *Idylls of the King* the four poems called *Enid*, *Vivien*, *Elaine*, and *Guinevere*, which with little change, hardly any indeed except some additions to *Vivien*, form a part of the completed work under the names of *The Marriage of Geraint*, *Geraint and Enid*, *Merlin and Vivien*, *Lancelot and Elaine*, and *Guinevere* (*Enid* having been divided ... In 1869 appeared *The Coming of Arthur*,

Holy Grail, *Pelleas and Ettarre*, and *The Passing of Arthur*, the last including the *Morte d'Arthur* previously published; in 1871 *The Last Tournament*, in 1872 *Gareth and Lynette*, and finally in 1885, *Balin and Balan*, which completes the series of twelve idylls, in which *The Coming of Arthur* serves as introduction and *The Passing of Arthur* as conclusion, while the remaining ten, not being pictures of Arthur himself, but of the other personages of the romance, and of the King only indirectly through them, have as a general title *The Round Table*

Before the appearance of the volume containing *The Holy Grail* in 1869, it was impossible to form a conception of the work as a whole The four idylls which first appeared seemed to be, and perhaps were, simply four independent delineations of woman's character selected from the cycle of Arthurian romance, and representing in Enid the true ideal of maidenhood and wifehood, in Vivien the type of impurity and falseness, in Elaine that of impulsive and wilful girlhood, and in Guinevere that of the erring and repentant wife It was not therefore until the publication of the next volume that the structure and moral drift of the work began to be perceived, and the addition of *Gareth and Lynette* as the first, and *The Last Tournament* as the last of the Round Table series, made the artistic effect far more complete In the address to the Queen which concludes the series the poet has himself indicated the moral purpose of his poem and the view which he takes of its subject :—

"accept this old imperfect tale,
New-old, and shadowing Sense at war with Soul
Rather than that gray king, whose name, a ghost,
Streams like a cloud, man-shaped, from mountain peak,

And cleaves to cairn and cromlech still; or him
Of Geoffrey's book, or him of Malleor's, one
Touch'd by the adulterous finger of a time
That hover'd between war and wantonness,
And crownings and dethronements."

We are not, therefore, to look in the *Idylls* for a historical presentation of the Celtic Arthur, nor yet for a reproduction of the hero of medieval chivalry, such as we find him in Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Britonum* or in Malory's *Morte Darthur:* the framework of the old legends is used, but the tale is in its essentials modern; and to censure the poet for making his heroes think the thoughts and speak the language of the nineteenth century is as much out of place as to censure the authors of the romances of *Merlin* and *Lancelot* for making their heroes, whom they imagine to have lived in the fifth century, think and speak like men and women of the thirteenth and fourteenth.

The tale then, for a single tale it is, and not a series of tales loosely strung together, has a definite moral aim. It is not an allegory, for the characters are men and women, and not personified qualities, but it has a spiritual meaning, it shadows "Sense at war with Soul." Arthur represents the force that works to make the dead world live, which has power for a time to accomplish its purpose, but is gradually overborne and goes down, though not utterly and for ever, for the war is one which is ever to be renewed,

"Nay—God my Christ—I pass but shall not die."

The hero is victorious over the external foe, he conquers rebels and heathen invaders; his failure is due to a more subtle enemy, to the taint of corruption which

creeps in among the circle which he has gathered round him,

> "To serve as model for the mighty world
> And be the fair beginners of a time."
>
> *Guinevere*, 461.

He is betrayed, and the purpose of his life is spoilt by those whom he most trusted to join with one will in his work and make it perfect:—

> "And all whereon I lean'd in wife and friend
> Is traitor to my house, and all my realm
> Reels back into the beast and is no more."
>
> *Passing of Arthur*, 24 ff.

In *The Coming of Arthur*, which serves as an introduction, we see him established on the throne in spite of those who cried "Away with him! No king of ours!" and victorious over Rome and the heathen In *Gareth and Lynette* there is set before us the springtime of Arthur's glory, when the Round Table seemed to be indeed a model for the world, and Arthur himself the representative of Christ upon earth. No sensual taint has yet crept in, or at least none is yet visible; in this idyll, alone of all the twelve, Guinevere is neither mentioned nor alluded to. it is the period referred to afterwards as the time

> "When every morning brought a noble chance,
> And every chance brought out a noble knight."
>
> *Passing of Arthur*, 398.

The picture which we have in this idyll of Arthur upon the dais-throne in the hall delivering doom in patriarchal fashion, and ringed round with knights in whose eyes shine honour and faith in their king, and pure

affection and the light of victory, is the sole representation which the *Idylls* afford us of Arthur in his kingly character engaged in administering the affairs of his kingdom, and such a picture it was necessary that we should have in this place. Gareth himself represents youthful craving for honour, neither discouraged by the yoke of vassalage which must first be borne, nor spoilt by any meaner motive; and the contrast is complete between the first and the last scenes of the "*Round Table*," between this idyll and *The Last Tournament*, the spring and the autumn of our story. In *Gareth and Lynette* things are in their golden prime, no suspicion of disloyalty has appeared, Gareth is wholly under the influence of the first wave of enthusiasm; for him the one thing worth living for is to be one of Arthur's knights,

> "Live pure, speak true, right wrong, follow the king,
> Else wherefore born?"

In *The Last Tournament* we see loyalty shaken, "a manhood ever less and lower" among the knights, lawlessness growing not only in distant parts of the realm, but in the lists of the tourney and in the banqueting-hall of the king's palace, and even courtesy is well-nigh gone out of fashion' while Tristram, the hero of this idyll, openly professes contempt for his broken vows in words which at the same time set forth the secret of the former greatness:—

> "The vows!
> O ay—the wholesome madness of an hour—
> They served their use, their time; for every knight
> Believed himself a greater than himself,
> And every follower eyed him as a God;

> Till he, being lifted up beyond himself,
> Did mightier deeds than elsewise he had done,
> And so the realm was made."—*Last Tournament*, 668 ff.

But besides representing the first stage in the development of the main theme, *Gareth and Lynette* contains within itself many independent illustrations of it Bellicent's suggestions of home-keeping ease and a comfortable bride rather than the dangerous pursuit of honour abroad; the illusion which made Gareth's companions doubt if the distant city were a city at all, or the king were king at all; and the failure of Lynette to recognize knightly worth in her champion, because he was apparently of low station,—these are all examples in their different ways of "Sense at war with Soul"; and above all the allegory contained in the successive combats of Gareth, representing "The war of Time against the soul of man," shadows forth the whole combat which is involved in the course of human life, and shows the soul of man victorious over all foes and finally over Death itself. The allegory is somewhat complicated by the fact that the actors in it are not, strictly speaking, allegorical characters, but persons who are consciously assuming the mask of such characters, but the drift of it is tolerably plain. The idea was taken by the four brethren of the story from a carving made by a hermit upon a rock, and consisting of five figures of armed men, which represented Morning, Mid-day, Evening, Night, and Death,

> "their faces forward all,
> And running down the Soul, a shape that fled
> With broken wings, torn raiment and loose hair,
> For help and shelter to the hermit's cave."

Hence they drew their notion of representing the characters named, Night and Death being united in one; and Gareth's battles with them are an allegory of the warfare of life. The combat with the Knight of the Morning-star signifies struggle against the temptations of early life. The stream of time is here full and narrow, "marking the fulness of life and energy of youth." The bridge which takes the river at a leap, "marks the impetuosity of youth, looking ever forward and leaping eagerly into manhood." The warrior who dwells in the gay pavilion, and is armed by the three fair girls "represents the power of pleasure and (since he stands a moment glorying) of pride" (Elsdale, *Studies in the Idylls*, p. 27). The second warrior represents the temptations of middle life. "The stream of time has spread out into a raging shallow with no bridge, for we are in middle life with no marked point of transition." It is, perhaps, pressing the allegory too far to say, as Mr. Elsdale does, that with his mail "burnished to blinding," and his "red and cipher face," this warrior represents the love of money which blinds the soul. Then finally the third, old and wrapped in hardened skins, figures the foes of later life, and Gareth in struggling with them

"seem'd as one
That all in later sadder age begins
To war against ill uses of a life,
But these from all his life arise, and cry,
'Thou hast made us lords, and canst not put us down!'"

And this struggle is the hardest of all, for so soon as the enemy is down, up he springs again, till the conflict is ended by a supreme effort, which hurls the adversary

headlong over the bridge into the stream below. Finally that which seems the most difficult of all the combats, the struggle with Night or Death, proves to be indeed the easiest of all, for the terrors which this opponent has inspired are founded only upon the outward circumstances of horror with which he has surrounded himself, and he is not in himself an adversary to be feared at all. To press the allegory further, and to say that the Lady Lyonors represents the soul in its immortal essence—the spirit, and her sister Lynette the rational, sensuous soul, is perhaps unnecessary. It is enough to say with Mr. Hutton, "Tennyson means that the whole aim of Arthur's Order was to deliver the spiritual captive of 'Castle Perilous' from the power of these worldlings of the flesh, and that the battle was to grow more grievous as the long day grew towards its close, though 'the passing of Arthur' at the last, fearful as it seemed, should be but the easy victory over a danger really conquered before . . . The mixture of buoyant life with symbolism in this story of Gareth, and the delicacy with which Tennyson has used and yet quite transformed the old Arthurian story of the relief of 'Castle Perilous,' seem to me to rank this poem among his happiest efforts." (*Literary Essays*, p. 411)

In richness of workmanship and beauty of picturesque description, such as is characteristic of the author, this idyll will bear comparison with any of the rest. Tennyson is perhaps the most picturesque of all English poets. If we compare him with Spenser, for example, with whom he has considerable affinity, we shall be all the more struck with the truth and completeness of background and surroundings which he gives to his figures, and

that too by a few magical touches which set the whole vividly before our minds, rather than by long enumeration of details. He is incapable of that carelessness of observation or description, which makes Spenser give us "lightning after thunder" and the impossible wood of Error. He sees the scene with unsurpassable accuracy and with the eye of an artist, and is able to grasp the essential features and sum them up for us in a few golden phrases. Of such descriptions in *Gareth and Lynette* we may note those of the journey of Gareth and his companions southward, and their seeing Camelot through the mist, of the Knight of the Morning-star, his pavilion and his damsels arming him, of the passage over the fields by night, and of the wakening in the castle when the horn was blown. With a view to this characteristic it is worth while to pay especial attention to the similes of the poem. Like Virgil's, they are pictures, each complete however slightly sketched, and often we shall observe a singular aptness in detail, which invites us to apply the comparisons more closely than we should at first be disposed to do, and shews with what artistic care they have been elaborated, simple as they may seem at first sight. This also is a Virgilian characteristic. Take for example the simile in the second book of the *Æneid*, ll. 469-475, in which the new warrior Pyrrhus, who has come forth only in the last days of Troy after the long siege, flashing in his arms amid the blazing torches, and threatening the palace of Priam with attack, is compared to a snake who has renewed his skin after the long winter sleep, during which he has been gathering venom, and now flashes in the sunlight, with forked tongue darting out and in :—

"Vestibulum ante ipsum primoque in limine Pyrrhus
Exsultat, telis et luce coruscus aena:
Qualis ubi in lucem coluber mala gramina pastus,
Frigida sub terra tumidum quem bruma tegebat,
Nunc positis novus exuviis nitidusque juventa,
Lubrica convolvit sublato pectore terga
Arduus ad solem et linguis micat ore trisulcis,"[1]

and compare it with Tennyson's simile in which Gareth casting down the coarse garb of vassalage and flashing in arms before he departs, is likened to

"those
Dullcoated things, that making slide apart
Their dusk wing-cases, all beneath there burns
A jewell'd harness, ere they pass and fly,
So Gareth ere he parted flashed in arms."

There is the same picturesque character, and the same elaborate aptness in both. and it would be easy to carry further the comparison between the two poets in these, as in several other points. Of the picturesque simile there are not so many examples in *Gareth and Lynette* as in some of the other idylls, but we may refer to l. 778:—

"in the deeps whereof a mere
Round as the red eye of an Eagle-owl,
Under the half-dead sunset glared";

l. 1002:—

"As if the flower,
That blows a globe of after arrowlets,
Ten thousand fold had grown, flashed the fierce shield,"

[1] "Before the porch and on the very threshold Pyrrhus exults, glittering in arms and flashing brass; as when coming forth to the light a viper, fed on evil herbage, whom the cold winter kept covered under the earth, swelling (with venom), now renewed, with skin cast off, and bright with youth, raises his breast and twines his slippery back, rising up high to the sun, and darts in and out his three-forked tongue."

and l. 1116:—

> "And could not wholly bring him under, more
> Than loud Southwesterns, rolling ridge on ridge,
> The buoy that rides at sea, and dips and springs
> For ever."

Another characteristic of Tennyson's similes is their individual and personal character. In many cases we shall observe that they do not so much appeal to common experience and refer to matter of common observation, as bring before us some special thing or some peculiar aspect of nature, which the poet, who has seen it, has vividly present to his own mind, while to the reader perhaps the picture suggested may be quite unfamiliar, because he is not acquainted with the thing referred to or has not seen that particular aspect of nature. The result is that the poet at times reverses the natural relation of the things compared, and illustrates by reference to that which is less familiar; but at the same time the exactness of detail and the vivid reality of the description often make us feel as if we had seen that which, in fact, we have not seen. For illustrations of this characteristic see notes on ll. 380, 1172, and 1392 of this idyll.

In regard to the use of blank verse, the practice of Tennyson is in agreement with that of Milton. No one has used rhyme with more skill and effect than Tennyson in his lyrical and ballad poetry, but as Milton discarded in *Paradise Lost* "the troublesome and modern bondage of riming," and chose blank verse as more suitable for a long epic or narrative poem, so Tennyson in all his longer poems of a narrative kind, as *Enoch Arden*, *The Princess*, and *Idylls of the King*, has adopted blank verse;

and he has fairly proved himself to be the greatest master of English blank verse since Milton, the only other possible competitor being Keats in *Hyperion*. Tennyson's blank verse is perhaps never so powerful as Milton's is at times, but it is almost always dignified, and never slovenly or heavy to read. His alliteration, modelled perhaps upon that of Spenser, is most skilful and delicate, so that we often only feel that it is there without perceiving where it is; and in the subtle use of imitative rhythm he is perhaps unsurpassed. As examples of the first we may select from *Gareth and Lynette* such passages as the following—

l. 169 :—

"The mother's eye
Full of the wistful fear that he would go,
And turning toward him wheresoe'er he turned,
Perplext his outward purpose, till an hour,
When waken'd by the wind which with full voice
Swept bellowing thro' the darkness on to dawn,
He rose,"

l. 184 :—

"So, when their feet were planted on the plain
That broaden'd toward the base of Camelot,
Far off they saw the silver misty morn
Rolling her smoke about the Royal mount,
That rose between the forest and the field."

l. 739 :—

"they shock'd, and Kay
Fell shoulder-slipt, and Gareth cried again,
'Lead and I follow,' and fast away she fled.
But after sod and shingle ceased to fly
Behind her, and the heart of her good horse
Was nigh to burst with violence of the beat,
Perforce she stay'd,"

l. 1372:—

"and out from this
Issued the bright face of a blooming boy
Fresh as a flower new-born, and crying, 'Knight,
Slay me not: my three brethren bad me do it,
To make a horror all about the house.'"

Many single verses might be quoted, such as l. 549:—

"No mellow master of the meats and drinks,"

and l. 1245:—

"And forage for the horse and flint for fire,"

and especially we find examples in double words, such as "princely-proud," "storm-strengthened," "deep-dimpled," "crag-carven," "gloomy-gladed," "bone-batter'd," etc.

Of imitative rhythm the chief examples are pointed out in the notes, see especially ll. 8, 13, 305, 474, 503, 636, 796, 891, 913, 939 ff., 1020, 1031, 1107, 1335, 1366.

Finally it may be said that no one has more happily used the variation of iambic with trochaic or dactylic rhythm, which preserve the best blank verse from monotony. Observe, for example, the effect produced by these variations in such passages as ll. 885-891.

With regard to the diction of the poem, it is characterised, as is usual with Tennyson, by the not unfrequent use of words which belong rather to the older English than to that of the present day, and in general by avoidance of the common-place in expression. Here he follows the example of Spenser, and many of his favourite words are Spenserian, as "ruth," "wreak," "bought" (meaning "fold" of a dragon), "trenchant," "clomb," and such forms of spelling as "past," "vext,"

"lackt," for "passed," "vexed," "lacked." In the *Idylls of the King*, and especially perhaps in *Gareth and Lynette*, he draws also for words upon Malory, whence come "brewis," "avail" (*i.e.* advantage), "unhappiness" (*i.e.* accident), "lightly" (*i.e.* quickly), "worship" (*i.e.* honour). Other unusual words, such as "discaged," "fluent," "increscent," "decrescent," are his own.

But the most remarkable feature about the diction of the *Idylls*, a feature which they share with most of Tennyson's other poetry, is its extreme simplicity; a result which has been attained partly by careful selection of native English words in preference to those of French or Latin origin, wherever the former can be used without obscurity or the appearance of affectation, and partly by choice of the simplest and most popular among the words of foreign origin, wherever these are employed. It would be absurd to pretend that there are not hundreds of words derived through French from Latin which are as simple and popular as those of native origin; "clear" is as popular as "bright," "river" as "stream," "cry" as "weep," "flower" as "bloom," and so forth: yet at the same time, since the less popular element in the language is mostly of foreign origin, it will generally happen that greater simplicity of diction is marked by a larger number of native English words, and from this point of view it is interesting to compare the proportion in which the two classes of words are used by different writers. It was said by a critic on the publication of the first four *Idylls of the King*, that "since the definitive formation of the English language no poetry has been written with so small an admixture of Latin as the *Idylls of the King*, and what will sound still stranger to the ears of those who

have been in the habit of regarding the Latin element as essential to the dignity of poetry, no language has surpassed in epic dignity the English of these poems" (*Edinb. Rev.* July, 1859). If we test this assertion we shall find that it is not far from the truth; and the idylls since published have the same characteristic. Taking passages of a hundred lines each at random from the volume which the reviewer had before him, we find in the *Marriage of Geraint*, 477-576, about 80 words of Latin origin, and in *Geraint and Enid*, 195-294, about 95: examining passages of similar length in *Gareth and Lynette* we find in ll. 641-740, about 90, and in ll. 1082-1181, about 85. If we compare this result with that which is given by the works of other English poets, we find that Chaucer in the first hundred lines of the *Knightes Tale* has about 80 words of French origin; Shakspeare in *Midsummer Night's Dream*, 2, 1, 148-247, has 90, and in *King Lear*, 2, 4, 139-238, about 110; Milton in *Paradise Lost*, 4, 598-697 (a passage in which his diction is simpler than usual) has about 145, while in *Paradise Lost*, 8, 1-100, he has 175;[1] Byron in the first hundred lines of the *Corsair* has nearly 150; Wordsworth in the lines on Tintern Abbey has an average of about 125 for each hundred lines, but in the *Excursion* considerably more. It will be seen that of the poets who have been mentioned after Chaucer, none but Shakspeare has anything like so small a proportion of imported words as Tennyson in the *Idylls*: a result which must certainly have been attained by a conscious endeavour on his part to write as far as possible in native

[1] These passages and the rest have not been selected as extreme cases, but as fair samples of the several varieties of style in the authors referred to.

English, a rule which was far less strictly kept in some of his earlier work than afterwards. Even this, however, does not give the measure of his severe simplicity of diction, for, as has been said, many of the words which are not of native origin are quite as simple and popular as those which are originally English; and the simplicity of Tennyson's diction is perhaps still more plainly marked by the very large proportion of monosyllables in his verse, so large indeed as sometimes to endanger the smoothness of its flow. On the whole we may perhaps say that the chief distinguishing mark of Tennyson's style, the feature to which it owes its individuality more than to any other is the combination of this simplicity of diction with extraordinary richness of imagery and subtlety of thought, the building up of the plainest materials into the most splendid edifices; and it may well be supposed that this characteristic has largely contributed to his great popularity, notwithstanding that in many respects he has the stamp of the cultured rather than of the popular poet.

It remains to say something of the source from which the story is drawn. This is mainly Malory's *Morte Darthur*,[1] of which the seventh book contains "the tale of

[1] *Le Morte Darthur* is a compilation made in the reign of Edward IV. by Sir Thomas Malorye or Maleore, chiefly from the French prose romances of *Merlin*, *Lancelot*, and *Tristan*, belonging to the 13th and 14th centuries. He followed his originals closely, but abridged the narrative considerably. The story, as he gives it, is full of inconsistencies, being made up from various sources inartificially pieced together, but it is a fine specimen of early English prose, and forms a convenient summary of the Arthurian romances. It was first printed by Caxton in 1485, and became very popular

Syr Gareth of Orkney, that was called Beaumains by Syr Kay." And here it may be remarked that the seventh book of the *Morte Darthur* is the only considerable part of the whole compilation which has not yet been traced to an earlier source. For every other part the diligence of its editors, and especially of the last, Dr. Oskar Sommer, has found the original, either in French or English, from which Malory "reduced" his narrative; and that such an original existed, probably in French, for the tale of Gareth also, we cannot doubt.[1] The nearest approach to it of which we are aware is the English metrical romance, taken from the French, called *Ly beaus Disconus* ("The Fair Unknown"), published in the second volume of Ritson's *English Metrical Romances*, and referred to by Dr. Sommer. In this a son of Gawain, kept apart by his mother and called only "beau fyz," leaves her secretly, goes to Arthur at Glastonbury, while still a "child," and asks for knighthood. By Arthur he is called Ly beaus Disconus, because he is so fair of face and cannot tell his name, and the first adventure is promised to him. A maid and a dwarf come to ask help for the Lady of Synadown, who is kept in strong prison, and Ly beaus Disconus claims the enterprise. The maiden complains of having a child sent, when there are Lancelot, Perceval, and Gawain,

[1] It is right, however, that I should quote the words of Dr. Sommer on this subject. "The whole book (*i.e.* the seventh of the *Morte Darthur*) has the character of a folks-tale, and differs greatly from the general run of Arthurian adventures. I am inclined to doubt its originally belonging to the Arthurian cycle, to which it may have been adapted by Malory or by some unknown writer before him, from some now lost French poem.' (Sommer's edition of Malory's *Morte Arthur*, vol. iii. p. 9.)

but he is armed and goes forth with her. Till the third day the damsel chides ever upon the knight, and tells him that they will soon meet with one who will take down his pride. Ly beaus Disconus fights with a knight who keeps a pass, overthrows him and sends him to Arthur. The damsel is reconciled to him and asks pardon. He fights afterwards with others, including a red giant, a black giant, and a knight "clothed in Ynde." He takes part in a tournament against one who set up a white jerfalcon as prize for him who should have a fairer lady than his own, and maintain her right in the field. For a year he falls under the enchantments of a lady and stays in her castle. Then he is reminded of his duty and rides on. Arrived at Synadown he conquers two brothers "clerkes of nigromansie," who hold the lady imprisoned, *frees the lady from enchantment, learns that* he could not have done it if he had not been of Gawain's kin, and marries her at the court of Arthur.

There is a good deal of general resemblance between this story and that of Gareth in the *Morte Darthur*, but it is not close enough to have served as original for Malory, whose narratives do not much vary from their sources except in the matter of brevity. It serves, however, to testify to the existence in French of a tale resembling that with which we are concerned. Turning to the *Morte Darthur* we find that the story begins with the appearance of Gareth at Arthur's court held at Kink-Kenadon on the feast of Pentecost. All that goes before this in *Gareth and Lynette* (ll. 1-430) is of Tennyson's own invention; but from this point he follows the tale of Beaumains in its main lines. The resemblances in detail are sufficiently pointed out in the notes; it will be enough

here to sketch the story, that it may be seen where Tennyson has deviated from or modified it.

A little before mid-day on the feast of Pentecost Sir Gawain looking from a window of the castle espied three men on horseback, and a dwarf on foot. The three men alighted and the dwarf kept their horses, and one of the three was higher than the other two by a foot and a half. Sir Gawain announced to the King that strange adventures were coming, and they went to meat with all the Knights of the Round Table. Then at the high feast came into the hall two men well beseen, and upon their shoulders there leaned the goodliest young man and the fairest and largest handed that ever they all saw, but he fared as though he might not go but if he leaned on their shoulders. They went up to the daïs and then the young man drew himself up straight and saluting the King said he would ask three gifts, and one he would ask now, but the other two after a twelvemonth at the high feast. Arthur promised that he should have his asking, and he asked first for meat and drink for a twelvemonth, which was granted. The King asked his name, but he said he could not tell. "That is marvel," said the King, "that thou knowest not thy name, and thou art the goodliest young man that ever I saw."[1] The king charges Sir Kay to feed him well.

[1] Cp. *Ly beaus Disconus*, l. 55 ff.:—

> "*Thenne said* Arthur the King,
> Thys is a wonder thyng,
> Be God and Seynt Denis,
> Whanne he that wolde be a Knyght
> Ne wat noght what he hyght,
> And is so fayr of vys."

Sir Kay says he is certainly no gentleman by birth, or he would have asked for horse and armour, and he gives him the name Beaumains, and says he will feed him till he is as fat as a pork hog. So the two men leave him with Sir Kay, who mocks him, but Gawain is angry, and Lancelot bids Kay leave his mocking and remember how he scorned Sir Dinadan's brother and gave him a name in mockery, who afterwards proved a good knight. Then Kay says, "This will never prove such," and makes him eat with the boys at the hall door. Gawain and Lancelot invite him to their chamber to eat, but he refuses all and will do nothing but obey Sir Kay, who keeps him in the kitchen, where he is ever meek and mild. He takes pleasure to see jousting of knights, and in contests with his fellows he casts bar or stone two yards beyond all others, and so he continues for a year.

Then at *Whitsuntide Arthur kept feast at Carlion*, and there came a damsel into the hall and prayed the king to send a knight to help her lady, who was besieged in her castle by the Red Knight of the red lawns. Then Beaumains came before the king and requested his two other gifts, viz., to have this adventure of the damsel, and to be made knight by Lancelot, who should ride after him and make him knight when he should require him. The king granted the request, but the damsel objected, "Shall I have none but one that is your kitchen page?" and so took horse and departed. One came and told Beaumains that his horse and armour had come for him, and he armed himself and took his leave, and rode after the damsel. Kay pursued him and was unhorsed by Beaumains,

who took his shield and spear. He proffered to joust with Lancelot, who was following him, and gave him much ado to keep from being shamed. Then he asked Lancelot to make him a knight, telling him that he is Gareth, brother to Sir Gawain. Sir Lancelot made him knight, and caused Sir Kay to be borne home. The damsel, however, would have none of him and said, "Thou stinkest of the kitchen: weenest thou that I allow thee for yonder knight that thou killed'st? Nay, truly, for thou slewest him unhappily and cowardly. What art thou but a lubber and a turner of spits and a ladle-washer?" Beaumains replied that he had undertaken the adventure and would assay to finish it. And as they rode there came a man flying who asked help for his lord against six thieves who had bound him and would slay him. Beaumains came and slew all the six thieves, and they went to the knight's castle, where the damsel would not sit at table with Beaumains. Then on the morn they rode on till they came to a great forest; an there was a river, and but one passage, and two knigh on the further side ready to stop them. Beaumai rushed into the water, and they fought in the stre till one of the two knights was smitten down into water and drowned. Then he spurred on to land fought with the other knight and slew him, and on with the damsel, who said, "Alas that ever a kit page should slay such two doughty knights: weenest thou hast done doughtily: that is not so the first knight stumbled, and there he was dro in the water, and the last knight by mishap camest behind him and mishappily thou slewest Beaumains said he recked not of her words,

might win her lady, and that he feared not any that he might meet. She warned him that he had better turn back, for he should meet with those who would abate his boast. So they rode together till evensong, and then they came to a black lawn, and there was a black hawthorn, and thereon hung a black banner and on the other side a black shield, and by it stood a black spear and a great black horse. There sat a knight all armed in black harness, and his name was the knight of the black lawn. He asked whether this was the champion from Arthur's court, and the damsel said, "Nay, this is but a kitchen-knave," and added, that she would gladly be rid of him, and that through mishap he had slain two knights at the ford. The Black Knight says he will only take his horse and armour and send him back, and Beaumains tells him he is a gentleman born and will prove it on his body. They fight, and the Black Knight is slain, and Beaumains arms himself in his armour and takes his horse. Still the damsel chides him and bids him keep away, but Beaumains says he will go with her for all that. They then meet a knight in green armour, who takes Beaumains for his brother the Black Knight, but being undeceived calls two damsels to arm him and fights with Beaumains. Moved by the scorn of the damsel, Beaumains overcomes him, and yields him his life only at the request of the damsel, a request which she makes much against her will. "Damsel," said Beaumains, "your charge is to me a pleasure, and at your commandment his life shall be saved." They lodge with the Green Knight, and again the damsel will not sit at table with Beaumains, and scorns at the Green Knight for

offering obedience to him. The next day they come to a strong tower, and under it a fair meadow, and a tournament about to be held. The lord of the castle offers to joust with the new comer, and appears all armed in red, and he also is brother to the Black Knight. The damsel tells him who Beaumains is and what he has done. They fight, and the Red Knight is conquered, and spared at the damsel's request. They stay that night at the castle. The next day they come to a city and a meadow before it, where the lord of the city is wont to joust in fine weather; and this lord is Sir Persant of Inde, and his pavilion and trappings and armour are all of the colour of Inde (*i.e.* dark blue). She warns Beaumains to flee, but he professes readiness to fight, and she begins now to repent of her discourtesy and to think that he must be of noble blood, chiefly because he has suffered gently all her ill-usage. "Damsel," says Beaumains, "a knight may do little that may not suffer a damsel; for whatsoever ye said unto me, I took none heed to your words, for the more ye said the more ye angered me, and my wrath I wreaked upon them that I had ado withal. And therefore all the missaying that ye missayed me furthered me in my battle." He adds that he has played the part of a servant to prove and assay his friends. She asks forgiveness, which he readily grants. He fights in knightly fashion with Sir Persant of Inde, overthrows him, "though him loth were," spares his life at the damsel's request, and finds that he is brother of the Black Knight and of the rest. He is entertained by Sir Persant with all courtesy and friendship. On the morn Sir Persant asks of their enterprise and tells about the Red Knight of the red lawn, who is besieging the

damsel's sister in her castle. The damsel says that her name is Lynet, and her sister's name Dame Liones, and Beaumains tells them that his name is Gareth, son of the king of Orkney. Meanwhile the dwarf takes word to the lady Liones of the coming of her sister and of the knight who shall fight for her, and also reports his deeds of arms. She sends to a hermitage of hers hard by wine and bread and baked venison and fowls for the entertainment of the knight, and the dwarf takes back word to the rest, who go to the hermitage and refresh themselves. The dwarf tells the Red Knight of the champion who has come, and the Red Knight promises him a shameful death if he meets him in fight. The next day Beaumains and the damsel Linet ride on and come to the castle; and before it was a fair plain and many tents pitched, and on the trees near were hanged the bodies of nigh forty knights with rich armour, all overcome and slain by the Red Knight of the red lawn, who showed no mercy, but put all to a shameful death; and yet he himself was a full noble knight. And near a sycamore tree there hung a huge horn, which should be blown by those who desired to fight with the Red Knight. Linet counselled him not to blow till noon, for the knight's strength increased ever during the forenoon, till he had the strength of seven men. Beaumains, however, blew it at once, and the knights leapt forth from their tents, and they within the castle looked over the walls and out at the windows. The Red Knight armed him hastily, and all was bloody-red, his armour, his spear, his shield, and his horse. Linet pointed out to Beaumains her sister Dame Liones at a window, and Dame Liones made courtesy to him. With that the

Red Knight bade him leave his looking at the lady and do battle with him. Beaumains reproached him with his shameful customs, and they fought till past noon, "and never would stint till at last they lacked wind both, and then they stood wagging and scattering, panting, blowing, and bleeding, that all that beheld them for the most part wept for pity." Then they fought again till great pieces had been hewn away from their armour, and at last, after narrowly escaping defeat, Beaumains smote his opponent down. He cried mercy, which Beaumains was not disposed to grant, but at length did so on conditions. Sir Beaumains rides to the castle, but finds it closed against him, and the lady tells him that before he wins her love he must gain more renown: he must depart now, but may return in a twelvemonth. Other adventures follow, and finally Dame Liones holds a great tournament in which all the noblest knights of the world take part, and Sir Gareth, by the help of a magic ring given him by Dame Liones, wins honour over all. He is made known to Arthur, and at last marries the lady Liones. "Thus endeth this tale of syr Gareth of Orkeney that wedded dame Lyones of the castel peryllous. And also syr Gaheris wedded her sister dame Lynet, that was called the damoysel savage."

It will be observed from this outline that Tennyson's changes are principally these:—he assigns a different reason for Gareth's vassalage, namely, his mother's injunction, whereas in *Morte Darthur* it is to prove his friends; he makes Gareth reveal his true character to Arthur first and receive knighthood from him and not from Lancelot, and the encounter with Lancelot is in the poem transferred to a later place; he reduces the

combats with knights which take place before reaching Castle Perilous from five to three, and these all take place at passages of the river, and are invested with allegorical significance. As regards the order of the combats, the battle with the Knight of the Morning-star corresponds nearly with the third combat in Malory, that namely with the Green Knight, the battle with the Sun answers to the first in Malory, that with the elder of the two brothers at the passage of the river, while for the encounter with the Knight of the Evening-star there is no near parallel in the original. The details of all the combats are very much modified, and the circumstances of the final encounter before the castle with 'Death' are entirely due to the poet, as is also the suggestion of Gareth's marriage to Lynette. In the poem, too, the combats take place all within the space of twenty-four hours, a day and a night, whereas in the romance they extend over several days. There is no doubt that by these changes the story gains very much in unity and in spiritual significance, while losing that character of aimless knight-errantry which is so prominent in the romance, all the combats are serious and deadly, not merely exercises of knightly skill to be followed by mutual courtesies and friendship, as is the case with more than one of those in the older tale It is needless to say that all the picturesque descriptions are due to the poet, and so also are the touches of sentiment in the relations of Gareth and Lynette (shewn chiefly in Lynette's songs)

GARETH AND LYNETTE.

The last tall son of Lot and Bellicent,
And tallest, Gareth, in a showerful spring
Stared at the spate A slender-shafted Pine
Lost footing, fell, and so was whirl'd away
'How he went down,' said Gareth, 'as a false knight
Or evil king before my lance if lance
Were mine to use—O senseless cataract,
Bearing all down in thy precipitancy—
And yet thou art but swollen with cold snows
And mine is living blood thou dost His will,
The Maker's, and not knowest, and I that know,
Have strength and wit, in my good mother's hall
Linger with vacillating obedience,
Prison'd, and kept and coax'd and whistled to—
Since the good mother holds me still a child!
Good mother is bad mother unto me!
A worse were better, yet no worse would I.
Heaven yield her for it, but in me put force
To weary her ears with one continuous prayer,
Until she let me fly discaged to sweep
In ever-highering eagle-circles up
To the great Sun of Glory, and thence swoop
Down upon all things base, and dash them dead.
A knight of Arthur, working out his will,

To cleanse the world. Why, Gawain, when he came
With Modred hither in the summertime,
Ask'd me to tilt with him, the proven knight.
Modred for want of worthier was the judge.
Then I so shook him in the saddle, he said,
"Thou hast half prevail'd against me," said so—he—
Tho' Modred biting his thin lips was mute,
For he is alway sullen : what care I?'

And Gareth went, and hovering round her chair
Ask'd, 'Mother, tho' ye count me still the child,
Sweet mother, do ye love the child?' She laugh'd,
'Thou art but a wild-goose to question it.'
'Then, mother, an ye love the child,' he said,
'Being a goose and rather tame than wild,
Hear the child's story.' 'Yea, my well-beloved,
An 'twere but of the goose and golden eggs.'

And Gareth answer'd her with kindling eyes,
'Nay, nay, good mother, but this egg of mine
Was finer gold than any goose can lay;
For this an Eagle, a royal Eagle, laid
Almost beyond eye-reach, on such a palm
As glitters gilded in thy Book of Hours.
And there was ever haunting round the palm
A lusty youth, but poor, who often saw
The splendour sparkling from aloft, and thought
"An I could climb and lay my hand upon it,
Then were I wealthier than a leash of kings."
But ever when he reach'd a hand to climb,
One, that had loved him from his childhood, caught
And stay'd him, "Climb not lest thou break thy neck,
I charge thee by my love," and so the boy,
Sweet mother, neither clomb, nor brake his neck,
But brake his very heart in pining for it,
And past away.'

To whom the mother said,
'True love, sweet son, had risk'd himself and climb'd,
And handed down the golden treasure to him.'

And Gareth answer'd her with kindling eyes,
'Gold? said I gold?--ay then, why he, or she,
Or whosoe'er it was, or half the world
Had ventured—*had* the thing I spake of been
Mere gold—but this was all of that true steel,
Whereof they forged the brand Excalibur,
And lightnings play'd about it in the storm,
And all the little fowl were flurried at it,
And there were cries and clashings in the nest,
That sent him from his senses let me go.'

Then Bellicent bemoan'd herself and said,
'Hast thou no pity upon my loneliness?
Lo, where thy father Lot beside the hearth
Lies like a log, and all but smoulder'd out'
For ever since when traitor to the King
He fought against him in the Barons' war,
And Arthur gave him back his territory,
His age hath slowly droopt, and now lies there
A yet-warm corpse, and yet unburiable,
No more, nor sees, nor hears, nor speaks, nor knows.
And both thy brethren are in Arthur's hall,
Albeit neither loved with that full love
I feel for thee, nor worthy such a love
Stay therefore thou, red berries charm the bird,
And thee, mine innocent, the jousts, the wars,
Who never knewest finger-ache, nor pang
Of wrench'd or broken limb—an often chance
In those brain-stunning shocks, and tourney-falls,
Frights to my heart; but stay follow the deer
By these tall firs and our fast-falling burns,
So make thy manhood mightier day by day;

Sweet is the chase: and I will seek thee out
Some comfortable bride and fair, to grace
Thy climbing life, and cherish my prone year,
Till falling into Lot's forgetfulness
I know not thee, myself, nor anything.
Stay, my best son! ye are yet more boy than man.'

Then Gareth, 'An ye hold me yet for child,
Hear yet once more the story of the child.
For, mother, there was once a King, like ours.
The prince his heir, when tall and marriageable,
Ask'd for a bride; and thereupon the King
Set two before him. One was fair, strong, arm'd—
But to be won by force—and many men
Desired her; one, good lack, no man desired.
And these were the conditions of the King:
That save he won the first by force, he needs
Must wed that other, whom no man desired,
A red-faced bride who knew herself so vile,
That evermore she long'd to hide herself,
Nor fronted man or woman, eye to eye—
Yea—some she cleaved to, but they died of her.
And one—they call'd her Fame; and one,—O Mother,
How can ye keep me tether'd to you—Shame.
Man am I grown, a man's work must I do.
Follow the deer? follow the Christ, the King,
Live pure, speak true, right wrong, follow the King—
Else, wherefore born?'

To whom the mother said,
'Sweet son, for there be many who deem him not,
Or will not deem him, wholly proven King—
Albeit in mine own heart I knew him King,
When I was frequent with him in my youth,
And heard him Kingly speak, and doubted him
No more than he, himself; but felt him mine

Of closest kin to me: yet—wilt thou leave
Thine easeful biding here, and risk thine all,
Life, limbs, for one that is not proven King?
Stay, till the cloud that settles round his birth
Hath lifted but a little. Stay, sweet son.'

And Gareth answer'd quickly, 'Not an hour,
So that ye yield me—I will walk thro' fire,
Mother, to gain it—your full leave to go.
Not proven, who swept the dust of ruin'd Rome
From off the threshold of the realm, and crush'd
The Idolaters, and made the people free?
Who should be King save him who makes us free?'

So when the Queen, who long had sought in vain
To break him from the intent to which he grew,
Found her son's will unwaveringly one,
She answer'd craftily, 'Will ye walk thro' fire?
Who walks thro' fire will hardly heed the smoke.
Ay, go then, an ye must: only one proof,
Before thou ask the King to make thee knight,
Of thine obedience and thy love to me,
Thy mother,—I demand.'

And Gareth cried,
'A hard one, or a hundred, so I go.
Nay—quick! the proof to prove me to the quick!'

But slowly spake the mother looking at him,
'Prince, thou shalt go disguised to Arthur's hall,
And hire thyself to serve for meats and drinks
Among the scullions and the kitchen-knaves,
And those that hand the dish across the bar.
Nor shalt thou tell thy name to anyone.
And thou shalt serve a twelvemonth and a day.'

Sweet is the chase: and I will seek thee out
Some comfortable bride and fair, to grace
Thy climbing life, and cherish my prone year,
Till falling into Lot's forgetfulness
I know not thee, myself, nor anything.
Stay, my best son! ye are yet more boy than man.'

Then Gareth, 'An ye hold me yet for child,
Hear yet once more the story of the child.
For, mother, there was once a King, like ours.
The prince his heir, when tall and marriageable,
Ask'd for a bride; and thereupon the King
Set two before him. One was fair, strong, arm'd—
But to be won by force—and many men
Desired her; one, good lack, no man desired.
And these were the conditions of the King:
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Must wed that other, whom no man desired,
A red-faced bride who knew herself so vile,
That evermore she long'd to hide herself,
Nor fronted man or woman, eye to eye—
Yea—some she cleaved to, but they died of her.
And one—they call'd her Fame; and one,—O Mother,
How can ye keep me tether'd to you—Shame.
Man am I grown, a man's work must I do.
Follow the deer? follow the Christ, the King,
Live pure, speak true, right wrong, follow the King—
Else, wherefore born?'

To whom the mother said,
'Sweet son, for there be many who deem him not,
Or will not deem him, wholly proven King—
Albeit in mine own heart I knew him King,
When I was frequent with him in my youth,
And heard him Kingly speak, and doubted him
No more than he, himself; but felt him mine,

Of closest kin to me: yet—wilt thou leave
Thine easeful biding here, and risk thine all,
Life, limbs, for one that is not proven King?
Stay, till the cloud that settles round his birth
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And Gareth answer'd quickly, 'Not an hour,
So that ye yield me—I will walk thro' fire,
Mother, to gain it—your full leave to go.
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The Idolaters, and made the people free?
Who should be King save him who makes us free?'

So when the Queen, who long had sought in vain
To break him from the intent to which he grew,
Found her son's will unwaveringly one,
She answer'd craftily, Will ye walk thro' fire?
Who walks thro' fire will hardly heed the smoke.
Ay, go then, an ye must only one proof,
Before thou ask the King to make thee knight,
Of thine obedience and thy love to me,
Thy mother,—I demand.'

And Gareth cried,
'A hard one, or a hundred, so I go.
Nay—quick! the proof to prove me to the quick!'

But slowly spake the mother looking at him,
'Prince, thou shalt go disguised to Arthur's hall,
And hire thyself to serve for meats and drinks
Among the scullions and the kitchen-knaves,
And those that hand the dish across the bar
Nor shalt thou tell thy name to anyone
And thou shalt serve a twelvemonth and a day.'

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Of thine obedience and thy love to me,
Thy mother,—I demand.'

And Gareth cried,
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Nay—quick! the proof to prove me to the quick!'

But slowly spake the mother looking at him,
'Prince, thou shalt go disguised to Arthur's hall,
And hire thyself to serve for meats and drinks
Among the scullions and the kitchen-knaves,
And those that hand the dish across the bar.
Nor shalt thou tell thy name to anyone
And thou shalt serve a twelvemonth and a day.'

For so the Queen believed that when her son
Beheld his only way to glory lead
Low down thro' villain kitchen-vassalage,
Her own true Gareth was too princely-proud
To pass thereby; so should he rest with her,
Closed in her castle from the sound of arms.

Silent awhile was Gareth, then replied,
'The thrall in person may be free in soul,
And I shall see the jousts. Thy son am I,
And since thou art my mother, must obey.
I therefore yield me freely to thy will;
For hence will I, disguised, and hire myself
To serve with scullions and with kitchen-knaves;
Nor tell my name to any—no, not the King.'

Gareth awhile linger'd. The mother's eye
Full of the wistful fear that he would go,
And turning toward him wheresoe'er he turn'd,
Perplext his outward purpose, till an hour,
When waken'd by the wind which with full voice
Swept bellowing thro' the darkness on to dawn,
He rose, and out of slumber calling two
That still had tended on him from his birth,
Before the wakeful mother heard him, went.

The three were clad like tillers of the soil.
Southward they set their faces. The birds made
Melody on branch, and melody in mid air.
The damp hill-slopes were quicken'd into green,
And the live green had kindled into flowers,
For it was past the time of Easterday.

So, when their feet were planted on the plain
That broaden'd toward the base of Camelot,
Far off they saw the silver-misty morn

Rolling her smoke about the Royal mount,
That rose between the forest and the field.
At times the summit of the high city flash'd;
At times the spires and turrets half-way down
Prick'd thro' the mist; at times the great gate shone
Only, that open'd on the field below:
Anon, the whole fair city had disappear'd.

Then those who went with Gareth were amazed,
One crying, 'Let us go no further, lord.
Here is a city of Enchanters, built
By fairy Kings.' The second echo'd him,
'Lord, we have heard from our wise man at home
To Northward, that this King is not the King,
But only changeling out of Fairyland,
Who drave the heathen hence by sorcery
And Merlin's glamour.' Then the first again,
'Lord, there is no such city anywhere,
But all a vision.'

Gareth answer'd them
With laughter, swearing he had glamour enow
In his own blood, his princedom, youth and hopes,
To plunge old Merlin in the Arabian sea;
So push'd them all unwilling toward the gate.
And there was no gate like it under heaven.
For barefoot on the keystone, which was lined
And rippled like an ever-fleeting wave,
The Lady of the Lake stood: all her dress
Wept from her sides as water flowing away;
But like the cross her great and goodly arms
Stretch'd under all the cornice and upheld:
And drops of water fell from either hand;
And down from one a sword was hung, from one
A censer, either worn with wind and storm;
And o'er her breast floated the sacred fish;

And in the space to left of her, and right,
Were Arthur's wars in weird devices done,
New things and old co-twisted, as if Time
Were nothing, so inveterately, that men
Were giddy gazing there; and over all
High on the top were those three Queens, the friends
Of Arthur, who should help him at his need.

Then those with Gareth for so long a space
Stared at the figures, that at last it seem'd
The dragon-boughts and elvish emblemings
Began to move, seethe, twine and curl: they call'd
To Gareth, 'Lord, the gateway is alive.'

And Gareth likewise on them fixt his eyes
So long, that ev'n to him they seem'd to move.
Out of the city a blast of music peal'd.
Back from the gate started the three, to whom
From out thereunder came an ancient man,
Long-bearded, saying, 'Who be ye, my sons?'

Then Gareth, 'We be tillers of the soil,
Who leaving share in furrow come to see
The glories of our King: but these, my men,
(Your city moved so weirdly in the mist)
Doubt if the King be King at all, or come
From Fairyland; and whether this be built
By magic, and by fairy Kings and Queens;
Or whether there be any city at all,
Or all a vision: and this music now
Hath scared them both, but tell thou these the truth.'

Then that old Seer made answer playing on him
And saying, 'Son, I have seen the good ship sail
Keel upward, and mast downward, in the heavens,
And solid turrets topsy-turvy in air:

And here is truth; but an it please thee not,
Take thou the truth as thou hast told it me.
For truly as thou sayest, a Fairy King
And Fairy Queens have built the city, son;
They came from out a sacred mountain-cleft
Toward the sunrise, each with harp in hand,
And built it to the music of their harps.
And, as thou sayest, it is enchanted, son,
For there is nothing in it as it seems
Saving the King, tho' some there be that hold
The King a shadow, and the city real:
Yet take thou heed of him, for, so thou pass
Beneath this archway, then wilt thou become
A thrall to his enchantments, for the King
Will bind thee by such vows, as is a shame
A man should not be bound by, yet the which
No man can keep; but, so thou dread to swear,
Pass not beneath this gateway, but abide
Without, among the cattle of the field.
For an ye heard a music, like enow
They are building still, seeing the city is built
To music, therefore never built at all,
And therefore built for ever.'

Gareth spake
Anger'd, 'Old Master, reverence thine own beard
That looks as white as utter truth, and seems
Wellnigh as long as thou art statured tall!
Why mockest thou the stranger that hath been
To thee fair-spoken?'

But the Seer replied,
'Know ye not then the Riddling of the Bards?
"Confusion, and illusion, and relation,
Elusion, and occasion, and evasion"?
I mock thee not but as thou mockest me,

And all that see thee, for thou art not who
Thou seemest, but I know thee who thou art.
And now thou goest up to mock the King,
Who cannot brook the shadow of any lie.'

Unmockingly the mocker ending here
Turn'd to the right, and past along the plain;
Whom Gareth looking after said, 'My men,
Our one white lie sits like a little ghost
Here on the threshold of our enterprise.
Let love be blamed for it, not she, nor I:
Well, we will make amends.'

With all good cheer
He spake and laugh'd, then enter'd with his twain
Camelot, a city of shadowy palaces
And stately, rich in emblem and the work
Of ancient kings who did their days in stone;
Which Merlin's hand, the Mage at Arthur's court,
Knowing all arts, had touch'd, and everywhere
At Arthur's ordinance, tipt with lessening peak
And pinnacle, and had made it spire to heaven.
And ever and anon a knight would pass
Outward, or inward to the hall: his arms
Clash'd; and the sound was good to Gareth's ear.
And out of bower and casement shyly glanced
Eyes of pure women, wholesome stars of love;
And all about a healthful people stept
As in the presence of a gracious king.

Then into hall Gareth ascending heard
A voice, the voice of Arthur, and beheld
Far over heads in that long-vaulted hall
The splendour of the presence of the King
Throned, and delivering doom—and look'd no more—
But felt his young heart hammering in his ears,

And thought, 'For this half-shadow of a lie
The truthful King will doom me when I speak.'
Yet pressing on, tho' all in fear to find
Sir Gawain or Sir Modred, saw nor one
Nor other, but in all the listening eyes
Of those tall knights, that ranged about the throne,
Clear honour shining like the dewy star
Of dawn, and faith in their great King with pure
Affection, and the light of victory,
And glory gain'd, and evermore to gain.

Then came a widow crying to the King,
'A boon, Sir King! Thy father, Uther, reft
From my dead lord a field with violence:
For howsoe'er at first he proffer'd gold,
Yet, for the field was pleasant in our eyes,
We yielded not; and then he reft us of it
Perforce, and left us neither gold nor field.'

Said Arthur, 'Whether would ye? gold or field?
To whom the woman weeping, 'Nay, my lord,
The field was pleasant in my husband's eye.'

And Arthur, 'Have thy pleasant field again,
And thrice the gold for Uther's use thereof,
According to the years. No boon is here,
But justice, so thy say be proven true.
Accursed, who from the wrongs his father did
Would shape himself a right!'

And while she past,
Came yet another widow crying to him,
'A boon, Sir King! Thine enemy, King, am I.
With thine own hand thou slewest my dear lord,
A knight of Uther in the Barons' war,
When Lot and many another rose and fought

Against thee, saying thou wert basely born.
I held with these, and loathe to ask thee aught.
Yet lo! my husband's brother had my son
Thrall'd in his castle, and hath starved him dead;
And standeth seized of that inheritance
Which thou that slewest the sire hast left the son.
So tho' I scarce can ask it thee for hate,
Grant me some knight to do the battle for me,
Kill the foul thief, and wreak me for my son.'

Then strode a good knight forward, crying to him,
'A boon, Sir King! I am her kinsman, I.
Give me to right her wrong, and slay the man.'

Then came Sir Kay, the seneschal, and cried,
'A boon, Sir King! ev'n that thou grant her none,
This railer, that hath mock'd thee in full hall—
None; or the wholesome boon of gyve and gag.'

But Arthur, 'We sit King, to help the wrong'd
Thro' all our realm. The woman loves her lord.
Peace to thee, woman, with thy loves and hates!
The kings of old had doom'd thee to the flames,
Aurelius Emrys would have scourged thee dead,
And Uther slit thy tongue: but get thee hence—
Lest that rough humour of the kings of old
Return upon me! Thou that art her kin,
Go likewise; lay him low and slay him not,
But bring him here, that I may judge the right,
According to the justice of the King:
Then, be he guilty, by that deathless King
Who lived and died for men, the man shall die.'

Then came in hall the messenger of Mark,
A name of evil savour in the land,
The Cornish king. In either hand he bore

What dazzled all, and shone far-off as shines
A field of charlock in the sudden sun
Between two showers, a cloth of palest gold,
Which down he laid before the throne, and knelt,
Delivering, that his lord, the vassal king,
Was ev'n upon his way to Camelot;
For having heard that Arthur of his grace
Had made his goodly cousin, Tristram, knight,
And, for himself was of the greater state,
Being a king, he trusted his liege-lord
Would yield him this large honour all the more;
So pray'd him well to accept this cloth of gold,
In token of true heart and fealty.

Then Arthur cried to rend the cloth, to rend
In pieces, and so cast it on the hearth.
An oak-tree smoulder'd there. 'The goodly knight!
What! shall the shield of Mark stand among these?'
For, midway down the side of that long hall
A stately pile,—whereof along the front,
Some blazon'd, some but carven, and some blank,
There ran a treble range of stony shields,—
Rose, and high-arching overbrow'd the hearth.
And under every shield a knight was named:
For this was Arthur's custom in his hall;
When some good knight had done one noble deed,
His arms were carven only; but if twain,
His arms were blazon'd also; but if none,
The shield was blank and bare without a sign
Saving the name beneath; and Gareth saw
The shield of Gawain blazon'd rich and bright,
And Modred's blank as death; and Arthur cried
To rend the cloth and cast it on the hearth.

'More like are we to reave him of his crown
Than make him knight because men call him king

The kings we found, ye know we stay'd their hands
From war among themselves, but left them kings;
Of whom were any bounteous, merciful,
Truth-speaking, brave, good livers, them we enroll'd
Among us, and they sit within our hall.
But Mark hath tarnish'd the great name of king,
As Mark would sully the low state of churl:
And, seeing he hath sent us cloth of gold,
Return, and meet, and hold him from our eyes,
Lest we should lap him up in cloth of lead,
Silenced for ever—craven—a man of plots,
Craft, poisonous counsels, wayside ambushings—
No fault of thine: let Kay the seneschal
Look to thy wants, and send thee satisfied—
Accursed, who strikes nor lets the hand be seen!'

And many another suppliant crying came
With noise of ravage wrought by beast and man,
And evermore a knight would ride away.

Last, Gareth leaning both hands heavily
Down on the shoulders of the twain, his men,
Approach'd between them toward the King, and ask'd,
'A boon, Sir King (his voice was all ashamed),
For see ye not how weak and hungerworn
I seem—leaning on these? grant me to serve
For meat and drink among thy kitchen-knaves
A twelvemonth and a day, nor seek my name.
Hereafter I will fight.'

To him the King,
'A goodly youth and worth a goodlier boon!
But so thou wilt no goodlier, then must Kay,
The master of the meats and drinks, be thine.'

He rose and past; then Kay, a man of mien

Wan-sallow as the plant that feels itself
Root-bitten by white lichen,

'Lo ye now!
This fellow hath broken from some Abbey, where,
God wot, he had not beef and brewis enow,
However that might chance! but an he work,
Like any pigeon will I cram his crop,
And sleeker shall he shine than any hog'

Then Lancelot standing near, 'Sir Seneschal,
Sleuth-hound thou knowest, and gray, and all the hounds;
A horse thou knowest, a man thou dost not know
Broad brows and fair, a fluent hair and fine,
High nose, a nostril large and fine, and hands
Large, fair and fine'—Some young lad's mystery—
But, or from sheepcot or king's hall, the boy
Is noble-natured. Treat him with all grace,
Lest he should come to shame thy judging of him'

Then Kay, 'What murmurest thou of mystery?
Think ye this fellow will poison the King's dish?
Nay, for he spake too fool-like mystery!
Tut, an the lad were noble, he had ask'd
For horse and armour fair and fine, forsooth'
Sir Fine-face, Sir Fair-hands? but see thou to it
That thine own fineness, Lancelot, some fine day
Undo thee not—and leave my man to me'

So Gareth all for glory underwent
The sooty yoke of kitchen-vassalage;
Ate with young lads his portion by the door,
And couch'd at night with grimy kitchen-knaves.
And Lancelot ever spake him pleasantly,
But Kay the seneschal, who loved him not,
Would hustle and harry him, and labour him

Beyond his comrade of the hearth, and set
To turn the broach, draw water, or hew wood,
Or grosser tasks; and Gareth bowed himself
With all obedience to the King, and wrought
All kind of service with a noble ease
That graced the lowliest act in doing it.
And when the thralls had talk among themselves,
And one would praise the love that linkt the King
And Lancelot—how the King had saved his life
In battle twice, and Lancelot once the King's—
For Lancelot was the first in Tournament,
But Arthur mightiest on the battle-field—
Gareth was glad. Or if some other told,
How once the wandering forester at dawn,
Far over the blue tarns and hazy seas,
On Caer-Eryri's highest found the King,
A naked babe, of whom the Prophet spake,
'He passes to the Isle Avilion,
He passes and is heal'd and cannot die'—
Gareth was glad. But if their talk were foul,
Then would he whistle rapid as any lark,
Or carol some old roundelay, and so loud
That first they mock'd, but, after, reverenced him
Or Gareth telling some prodigious tale
Of knights, who sliced a red life-bubbling way
Thro' twenty folds of twisted dragon, held
All in a gap-mouth'd circle his good mates
Lying or sitting round him, idle hands,
Charm'd; till Sir Kay, the seneschal, would come
Blustering upon them, like a sudden wind
Among dead leaves, and drive them all apart.
Or when the thralls had sport among themselves,
So there were any trial of mastery,
He, by two yards in casting bar or stone
Was counted best; and if there chanced a joust,
So that Sir Kay nodded him leave to go,

Would hurry thither, and when he saw the knights
Clash like the coming and retiring wave,
And the spear spring, and good horse reel, the boy
Was half beyond himself for ecstasy.

So for a month he wrought among the thralls;
But in the weeks that follow'd, the good Queen,
Repentant of the word she made him swear,
And saddening in her childless castle, sent,
Between the in-crescent and de-crescent moon,
Arms for her son, and loosed him from his vow.

This, Gareth hearing from a squire of Lot
With whom he used to play at tourney once,
When both were children, and in lonely haunts
Would scratch a ragged oval on the sand,
And each at either dash from either end—
Shame never made girl redder than Gareth joy.
He laugh'd, he sprang. 'Out of the smoke, at once
I leap from Satan's foot to Peter's knee—
These news be mine, none other's—nay, the King's—
Descend into the city:' whereon he sought
The King alone, and found, and told him all.

'I have stagger'd thy strong Gawain in a tilt
For pastime; yea, he said it: joust can I.
Make me thy knight—in secret! let my name
Be hidd'n, and give me the first quest, I spring
Like flame from ashes.'

Here the King's calm eye
Fell on, and check'd, and made him flush, and bow
Lowly, to kiss his hand, who answer'd him,
'Son, the good mother let me know thee here,
And sent her wish that I would yield thee thine.
Make thee my knight? my knights are sworn to vows

Of utter hardihood, utter gentleness,
And, loving, utter faithfulness in love,
And uttermost obedience to the King.'

Then Gareth, lightly springing from his knees,
'My King, for hardihood I can promise thee.
For uttermost obedience make demand
Of whom ye gave me to, the Seneschal,
No mellow master of the meats and drinks!
And as for love, God wot, I love not yet,
But love I shall, God willing.'

And the King—
'Make thee my knight in secret? yea, but he,
Our noblest brother, and our truest man,
And one with me in all, he needs must know.'

'Let Lancelot know, my King, let Lancelot know,
Thy noblest and thy truest!'

And the King—
'But wherefore would ye men should wonder at you?
Nay, rather for the sake of me, their King,
And the deed's sake my knighthood do the deed,
Than to be noised of.'

Merrily Gareth ask'd,
'Have I not earn'd my cake in baking of it?
Let be my name until I make my name!
My deeds will speak: it is but for a day.'
So with a kindly hand on Gareth's arm
Smiled the great King, and half-unwillingly
Loving his lusty youthhood yielded to him.
Then, after summoning Lancelot privily,
'I have given him the first quest: he is not proven.
Look therefore when he calls for this in hall,

Thou get to horse and follow him far away.
Cover the lions on thy shield, and see
Far as thou mayest, he be nor ta'en nor slain.'

Then that same day there past into the hall
A damsel of high lineage, and a brow
May-blossom, and a cheek of apple-blossom,
Hawk-eyes; and lightly was her slender nose
Tip-tilted like the petal of a flower;
She into hall past with her page and cried,

'*O King, for thou hast driven the foe without,*
See to the foe within! bridge, ford, beset
By bandits, everyone that owns a tower
The Lord for half a league. Why sit ye there?
Rest would I not, Sir King, an I were king,
Till ev'n the lonest hold were all as free
From cursed bloodshed, as thine altar-cloth
From that best blood it is a sin to spill.'

'Comfort thyself,' said Arthur, 'I nor mine
Rest: so my knighthood keep the vows they swore,
The wastest moorland of our realm shall be
Safe, damsel, as the centre of this hall.
What is thy name? thy need?'

'My name?' she said—
'Lynette my name; noble; my need, a knight
To combat for my sister, Lyonors,
A lady of high lineage, of great lands,
And comely, yea, and comelier than myself.
She lives in Castle Perilous: a river
Runs in three loops about her living-place;
And o'er it are three passings, and three knights
Defend the passings, brethren, and a fourth
And of that four the mightiest, holds her stay'd

In her own castle, and so besieges her
To break her will, and make her wed with him:
And but delays his purport till thou send
To do the battle with him, thy chief man
Sir Lancelot whom he trusts to overthrow,
Then wed, with glory: but she will not wed
Save whom she loveth, or a holy life.
Now therefore have I come for Lancelot.'

Then Arthur mindful of Sir Gareth ask'd,
'Damsel, ye know this Order lives to crush
All wrongers of the Realm. But say, these four,
Who be they? What the fashion of the men?'

'They be of foolish fashion, O Sir King,
The fashion of that old knight-errantry
Who ride abroad, and do but what they will;
Courteous or bestial from the moment, such
As have nor law nor king; and three of these
Proud in their fantasy call themselves the Day,
Morning-Star, and Noon-Sun, and Evening-Star,
Being strong fools; and never a whit more wise
The fourth, who alway rideth arm'd in black,
A huge man-beast of boundless savagery.
He names himself the Night and oftener Death,
And wears a helmet mounted with a skull,
And bears a skeleton figured on his arms,
To show that who may slay or scape the three,
Slain by himself, shall enter endless night.
And all these four be fools, but mighty men,
And therefore am I come for Lancelot.'

Hereat Sir Gareth call'd from where he rose,
A head with kindling eyes above the throng,
'A boon, Sir King—this quest!' then—for he mark'd
Kay near him groaning like a wounded bull—

'Yea, King, thou knowest thy kitchen-knave am I,
And mighty thro' thy meats and drinks am I,
And I can topple over a hundred such.
Thy promise, King,' and Arthur glancing at him,
Brought down a momentary brow. 'Rough, sudden,
And pardonable, worthy to be knight—
Go therefore,' and all hearers were amazed.

But on the damsel's forehead shame, pride, wrath
Slew the May-white: she lifted either arm,
'Fie on thee, King! I ask'd for thy chief knight,
And thou hast given me but a kitchen-knave.'
Then ere a man in hall could stay her, turn'd,
Fled down the lane of access to the King,
Took horse, descended the slope street, and past
The weird white gate, and paused without, beside
The field of tourney, murmuring 'kitchen-knave.'

Now two great entries open'd from the hall,
At one end one, that gave upon a range
Of level pavement where the King would pace
At sunrise, gazing over plain and wood;
And down from this a lordly stairway sloped
Till lost in blowing trees and tops of towers;
And out by this main doorway past the King.
But one was counter to the hearth, and rose
High that the highest-crested helm could ride
Therethro' nor graze: and by this entry fled
The damsel in her wrath, and on to this
Sir Gareth strode, and saw without the door
King Arthur's gift, the worth of half a town,
A warhorse of the best, and near it stood
The two that out of north had follow'd him:
This bare a maiden shield, a casque; that held
The horse, the spear; whereat Sir Gareth loosed
A cloak that dropt from collar-bone to heel,

A cloth of roughest web, and cast it down,
And from it like a fuel-smother'd fire,
That lookt half-dead, brake bright, and flash'd as those
Dull-coated things, that making slide apart
Their dusk wing-cases, all beneath there burns
A jewell'd harness, ere they pass and fly.
So Gareth ere he parted flash'd in arms.
Then as he donn'd the helm, and took the shield
And mounted horse and graspt a spear, of grain
Storm-strengthen'd on a windy site, and tipt
With trenchant steel, around him slowly prest
The people, while from out of kitchen came
The thralls in throng, and seeing who had work'd
Lustier than any, and whom they could but love,
Mounted in arms, threw up their caps and cried,
'God bless the King, and all his fellowship!'
And on thro' lanes of shouting Gareth rode
Down the slope street, and past without the gate.

So Gareth past with joy; but as the cur
Pluckt from the cur he fights with, ere his cause
Be cool'd by fighting, follows, being named,
His owner, but remembers all, and growls
Remembering, so Sir Kay beside the door
Mutter'd in scorn of Gareth whom he used
To harry and hustle.

'Bound upon a quest
With horse and arms—the King hath past his time—
My scullion knave! Thralls to your work again,
For an your fire be low ye kindle mine!
Will there be dawn in West and eve in East?
Begone!—my knave!—belike and like enow
Some old head-blow not heeded in his youth
So shook his wits they wander in his prime—
Crazed! How the villain lifted up his voice,

Nor shamed to bawl himself a kitchen-knave.
Tut: he was tame and meek enow with me,
Till peacock'd up with Lancelot's noticing.
Well—I will after my loud knave, and learn
Whether he know me for his master yet.
Out of the smoke he came, and so my lance
Hold, by God's grace, he shall into the mire—
Thence, if the King awaken from his craze,
Into the smoke again.'

But Lancelot said,
'Kay, wherefore wilt thou go against the King,
For that did never he whereon ye rail,
But ever meekly served the King in thee?
Abide: take counsel; for this lad is great
And lusty, and knowing both of lance and sword.'
'Tut, tell not me,' said Kay, 'ye are overfine
To mar stout knaves with foolish courtesies.'
Then mounted, on thro' silent faces rode
Down the slope city, and out beyond the gate.

But by the field of tourney lingering yet
Mutter'd the damsel, 'Wherefore did the King
Scorn me? for, were Sir Lancelot lackt, at least
He might have yielded to me one of those
Who tilt for lady's love and glory here,
Rather than—O sweet heaven! O fie upon him—
His kitchen knave.'

To whom Sir Gareth drew
(And there were none but few goodlier than he
Shining in arms, 'Damsel, the quest is mine.
Lead, and I follow.' She thereat, as one
That smells a foul-flesh'd agaric in the holt,
And deems it carrion of some woodland thing,
Or shrew, or weasel, nipt her slender nose

With petulant thumb and finger, shrilling, 'Hence!
Avoid, thou smellest all of kitchen-grease.
And look who comes behind,' for there was Kay.
'Knowest thou not me? thy master? I am Kay.
We lack thee by the hearth.'

And Gareth to him,
'Master no more! too well I know thee, ay—
The most ungentle knight in Arthur's hall.'
'Have at thee then,' said Kay: they shock'd, and Kay
Fell shoulder-slipt, and Gareth cried again,
'Lead, and I follow,' and fast away she fled.

But after sod and shingle ceased to fly
Behind her, and the heart of her good horse
Was nigh to burst with violence of the beat,
Perforce she stay'd, and overtaken spoke.

'What doest thou, scullion, in my fellowship?
Deem'st thou that I accept thee aught the more
Or love thee better, that by some device
Full cowardly, or by mere unhappiness,
Thou hast overthrown and slain thy master—thou!—
Dish-washer and broach-turner, loon!—to me
Thou smellest all of kitchen as before.'

'Damsel,' Sir Gareth answer'd gently, 'say
Whate'er ye will, but whatsoe'er ye say,
I leave not till I finish this fair quest,
Or die therefore.'

'Ay, wilt thou finish it?
Sweet lord, how like a noble knight he talks!
The listening rogue hath caught the manner of it.
But, knave, anon thou shalt be met with, knave,
And then by such a one that thou for all

The kitchen brewis that was ever supt
Shalt not once dare to look him in the face.'

'I shall assay,' said Gareth with a smile
That madden'd her, and away she flash'd again
Down the long avenues of a boundless wood,
And Gareth following was again beknaved

'Sir Kitchen-knave, I have miss'd the only way
Where Arthur's men are set along the wood;
The wood is nigh as full of thieves as leaves
If both be slain, I am rid of thee; but yet,
Sir Scullion, canst thou use that spit of thine?
Fight, an thou canst I have miss'd the only way.'

So till the dusk that follow'd evensong
Rode on the two, reviler and reviled,
Then after one long slope was mounted, saw,
Bowl-shaped, thro' tops of many thousand pines
A gloomy-gladed hollow slowly sink
To westward—in the deeps whereof a mere,
Round as the red eye of an Eagle-owl,
Under the half-dead sunset glared, and shouts
Ascended, and there brake a servingman
Flying from out of the black wood, and crying,
'They have bound my lord to cast him in the mere.'
Then Gareth, 'Bound am I to right the wrong'd,
But straither bound am I to bide with thee'
And when the damsel spake contemptuously,
'Lead, and I follow,' Gareth cried again,
'Follow, I lead!' so down among the pines
He plunged; and there, blackshadow'd nigh the mere,
And mid-thigh-deep in bulrushes and reed,
Saw six tall men haling a seventh along,
A stone about his neck to drown him in it.
Three with good blows he quieted, but three

Fled thro' the pines; and Gareth loosed the stone
From off his neck, then in the mere beside
Tumbled it; oilily bubbled up the mere.
Last, Gareth loosed his bonds and on free feet
Set him, a stalwart Baron, Arthur's friend.

'Well that ye came, or else these caitiff rogues
Had wreak'd themselves on me; good cause is theirs
To hate me, for my wont hath ever been
To catch my thief, and then like vermin here
Drown him, and with a stone about his neck;
And under this wan water many of them
Lie rotting, but at night let go the stone,
And rise, and flickering in a grimly light
Dance on the mere. Good now, ye have saved a life
Worth somewhat as the cleanser of this wood.
And fain would I reward thee worshipfully.
What guerdon will ye?'

Gareth sharply spake,
'None! for the deed's sake have I done the deed,
In uttermost obedience to the King.
But wilt thou yield this damsel harbourage?'

Whereat the Baron saying, 'I well believe
You be of Arthur's Table,' a light laugh
Broke from Lynette, 'Ay, truly of a truth,
And in a sort, being Arthur's kitchen-knave!—
But deem not I accept thee aught the more,
Scullion, for running sharply with thy spit
Down on a rout of craven foresters.
A thresher with his flail had scatter'd them.
Nay—for thou smellest of the kitchen still.
But an this lord will yield us harbourage,
Well.'

So she spake. A league beyond the wood,
All in a full-fair manor and a rich,
His towers where that day a feast had been
Held in high hall, and many a viand left,
And many a costly cate, received the three.
And there they placed a peacock in his pride
Before the damsel, and the Baron set
Gareth beside her, but at once she rose.

'Meseems, that here is much discourtesy,
Setting this knave, Lord Baron, at my side.
Hear me—this morn I stood in Arthur's hall,
And pray'd the King would grant me Lancelot
To fight the brotherhood of Day and Night—
The last a monster unsubduable
Of any save of him for whom I call'd—
Suddenly bawls this frontless kitchen-knave,
"The quest is mine; thy kitchen-knave am I,
And mighty thro' thy meats and drinks am I."
Then Arthur all at once gone mad replies,
"Go therefore," and so gives the quest to him—
Him—here—a villain fitter to stick swine
Than ride abroad redressing women's wrong,
Or sit beside a noble gentlewoman.'

Then half-ashamed and part-amazed, the lord
Now look'd at one and now at other, left
The damsel by the peacock in his pride,
And, seating Gareth at another board,
Sat down beside him, ate and then began.

'Friend, whether thou be kitchen-knave, or not,
Or whether it be the maiden's fantasy,
And whether she be mad, or else the King,
Or both or neither, or thyself be mad,
I ask not: but thou strikest a strong stroke,

For strong thou art and goodly therewithal,
And saver of my life; and therefore now,
For here be mighty men to joust with, weigh
Whether thou wilt not with thy damsel back
To crave again Sir Lancelot of the King.
Thy pardon; I but speak for thine avail,
The saver of my life.'

And Gareth said,
'Full pardon, but I follow up the quest,
Despite of Day and Night and Death and Hell.'

So when, next morn, the lord whose life he saved
Had, some brief space, convey'd them on their way
And left them with God-speed, Sir Gareth spake,
'Lead, and I follow.' Haughtily she replied,

'I fly no more: I allow thee for an hour.
Lion and stoat have isled together, knave,
In time of flood. Nay, furthermore, methinks
Some ruth is mine for thee. Back wilt thou, fool?
For hard by here is one will overthrow
And slay thee: then will I to court again,
And shame the King for only yielding me
My champion from the ashes of his hearth.'

To whom Sir Gareth answer'd courteously,
'Say thou thy say, and I will do my deed.
Allow me for mine hour, and thou wilt find
My fortunes all as fair as hers who lay
Among the ashes and wedded the King's son.'

Then to the shore of one of those long loops
Wherethro' the serpent river coil'd, they came.
Rough-thicketed were the banks and steep; the stream
Full, narrow; this a bridge of single arc

Took at a leap; and on the further side
Arose a silk pavilion, gay with gold
In streaks and rays, and all Lent-lily in hue,
Save that the dome was purple, and above,
Crimson, a slender banneret fluttering.
And therebefore the lawless warrior paced
Unarm'd, and calling, 'Damsel, is this he,
The champion thou hast brought from Arthur's hall?
For whom we let thee pass.' 'Nay, nay,' she said,
'Sir Morning-Star. The King in utter scorn
Of thee and thy much folly hath sent thee here
His kitchen-knave: and look thou to thyself.
See that he fall not on thee suddenly,
And slay thee unarm'd: he is not knight but knave.'

Then at his call, 'O daughters of the Dawn,
And servants of the Morning-Star, approach,
Arm me,' from out the silken curtain-folds
Bare-footed and bare-headed three fair girls
In gilt and rosy raiment came: their feet
In dewy grasses glisten'd; and the hair
All over glanced with dewdrop or with gem
Like sparkles in the stone Avanturine.
These arm'd him in blue arms, and gave a shield
Blue also, and thereon the morning star.
And Gareth silent gazed upon the knight,
Who stood a moment, ere his horse was brought,
Glorying; and in the stream beneath him, shone
Immingled with Heaven's azure waveringly,
The gay pavilion and the naked feet,
His arms, the rosy raiment, and the star.

Then she that watch'd him, 'Wherefore stare ye so?
Thou shakest in thy fear: there yet is time:
Flee down the valley before he get to horse.
Who will cry shame? Thou art not knight but knave.'

Said Gareth, 'Damsel, whether knave or knight,
Far liefer had I fight a score of times
Than hear thee so missay me and revile.
Fair words were best for him who fights for thee;
But truly foul are better, for they send
That strength of anger thro' mine arms, I know
That I shall overthrow him.'

And he that bore
The star, when mounted, cried from o'er the bridge,
'A kitchen-knave, and sent in scorn of me!
Such fight not I, but answer scorn with scorn.
For this were shame to do him further wrong
Than set him on his feet, and take his horse
And arms, and so return him to the King.
Come, therefore, leave thy lady lightly, knave
Avoid: for it beseemeth not a knave
To ride with such a lady.'

'Dog, thou liest.
I spring from loftier lineage than thine own.'
He spake; and all at fiery speed the two
Shock'd on the central bridge, and either spear
Bent but not brake, and either knight at once,
Hurl'd as a stone from out of a catapult
Beyond his horse's crupper and the bridge,
Fell, as if dead; but quickly rose and drew,
And Gareth lash'd so fiercely with his brand
He drave his enemy backward down the bridge,
The damsel crying, 'Well-stricken, kitchen-knave!'
Till Gareth's shield was cloven; but one stroke
Laid him that clove it grovelling on the ground.

Then cried the fall'n, 'Take not my life: I yield.'
And Gareth, 'So this damsel ask it of me
Good—I accord it easily as a grace.'

She reddening, 'Insolent scullion: I of thee?
I bound to thee for any favour ask'd!'
'Then shall he die.' And Gareth there unlaced
His helmet as to slay him, but she shriek'd,
'Be not so hardy, scullion, as to slay
One nobler than thyself' 'Damsel, thy charge
Is an abounding pleasure to me Knight,
Thy life is thine at her command. Arise
And quickly pass to Arthur's hall, and say
His kitchen-knave hath sent thee. See thou crave
His pardon for thy breaking of his laws.
Myself, when I return, will plead for thee.
Thy shield is mine—farewell; and, damsel, thou,
Lead, and I follow.'

And fast away she fled.
Then when he came upon her, spake, 'Methought,
Knave, when I watch'd thee striking on the bridge
The savour of thy kitchen came upon me
A little faintlier but the wind hath changed
I scent it twenty-fold.' And then she sang,
'"O morning star" (not that tall felon there
Whom thou by sorcery or unhappiness
Or some device, hast foully overthrown),
"O morning star that smilest in the blue,
O star, my morning dream hath proven true,
Smile sweetly, thou! my love hath smiled on me.

'But thou begone, take counsel, and away.
For hard by here is one that guards a ford—
The second brother in their fool's parable—
Will pay thee all thy wages, and to boot.
Care not for shame: thou art not knight but knave.'

To whom Sir Gareth answer'd, laughingly,
'Parables? Hear a parable of the knave

When I was kitchen-knave among the rest
Fierce was the hearth, and one of my co-mates
Own'd a rough dog, to whom he cast his coat,
"Guard it," and there was none to meddle with it.
And such a coat art thou, and thee the King
Gave me to guard, and such a dog am I,
To worry, and not to flee—and—knight or knave—
The knave that doth thee service as full knight
Is all as good, meseems, as any knight
Toward thy sister's freeing.'

'Ay, Sir Knave!
Ay, knave, because thou strikest as a knight,
Being but knave, I hate thee all the more.'

'Fair damsel, you should worship me the more,
That, being but knave, I throw thine enemies.'

'Ay, ay,' she said, 'but thou shalt meet thy match.'

So when they touch'd the second river-loop,
Huge on a huge red horse, and all in mail
Burnish'd to blinding, shone the Noonday Sun
Beyond a raging shallow. As if the flower,
That blows a globe of after arrowlets,
Ten thousand-fold had grown, flash'd the fierce shield,
All sun; and Gareth's eyes had flying blots
Before them when he turn'd from watching him.
He from beyond the roaring shallow roar'd,
'What doest thou, brother, in my marches here?'
And she athwart the shallow shrill'd again,
'Here is a kitchen-knave from Arthur's hall
Hath overthrown thy brother, and hath his arms.'
'Ugh!' cried the Sun, and vizoring up a red
And cipher face of rounded foolishness,
Push'd horse across the foamings of the ford,

Whom Gareth met midstream: no room was there
For lance or tourney-skill: four strokes they struck
With sword, and these were mighty; the new knight
Had fear he might be shamed; but as the Sun
Heaved up a ponderous arm to strike the fifth,
The hoof of his horse slipt in the stream, the stream
Descended, and the Sun was wash'd away.

Then Gareth laid his lance athwart the ford;
So drew him home; but he that fought no more,
As being all bone-batter'd on the rock,
Yielded; and Gareth sent him to the King.
'Myself when I return will plead for thee.'
'Lead, and I follow.' Quietly she led.
'Hath not the good wind, damsel, changed again?'
'Nay, not a point: nor art thou victor here.
There lies a ridge of slate across the ford;
His horse thereon stumbled—ay, for I saw it.

'"O Sun" (not this strong fool whom thou, Sir Knave,
Hast overthrown thro' mere unhappiness),
"O Sun, that wakenest all to bliss or pain,
O moon, that layest all to sleep again,
Shine sweetly: twice my love hath smiled on me."

'What knowest thou of lovesong or of love?
Nay, nay, God wot, so thou wert nobly born,
Thou hast a pleasant presence. Yea, perchance,—

'"O dewy flowers that open to the sun,
O dewy flowers that close when day is done,
Blow sweetly: twice my love hath smiled on me."

'What knowest thou of flowers, except, belike,
To garnish meats with? hath not our good King
Who lent me thee, the flower of kitchendom,

A foolish love for flowers? what stick ye round
The pasty? wherewithal deck the boar's head?
Flowers? nay, the boar hath rosemaries and bay.

'"O birds, that warble to the morning sky,
O birds that warble as the day goes by,
Sing sweetly: twice my love hath smiled on me."

'What knowest thou of birds, lark, mavis, merle,
Linnet? what dream ye when they utter forth
May-music growing with the growing light,
Their sweet sun-worship? these be for the snare
(So runs thy fancy) these be for the spit,
Larding and basting. See thou have not now
Larded thy last, except thou turn and fly.
There stands the third fool of their allegory.'

For there beyond a bridge of treble bow,
All in a rose-red from the west, and all
Naked it seem'd, and glowing in the broad
Deep-dimpled current underneath, the knight,
That named himself the Star of Evening, stood.

And Gareth, 'Wherefore waits the madman there
Naked in open dayshine?' 'Nay,' she cried,
'Not naked, only wrapt in harden'd skins
That fit him like his own; and so ye cleave
His armour off him, these will turn the blade.'

Then the third brother shouted o'er the bridge,
'O brother-star, why shine ye here so low?
Thy ward is higher up: but have ye slain
The damsel's champion?' and the damsel cried,

'No star of thine, but shot from Arthur's heaven
With all disaster unto thine and thee!

For both thy younger brethren have gone down
Before this youth ; and so wilt thou, Sir Star ;
Art thou not old ?'

'Old, damsel, old and hard,
Old, with the might and breath of twenty boys.'
Said Gareth, 'Old, and over-bold in brag !
But that same strength which threw the Morning Star
Can throw the Evening'

Then that other blew
A hard and deadly note upon the horn
'Approach and arm me !' With slow steps from out
An old storm-beaten, russet, many-stain'd
Pavilion, forth a grizzled damsel came,
And arm'd him in old arms, and brought a helm
With but a drying evergreen for crest,
And gave a shield whereon the Star of Even
Half-tarnish'd and half-bright, his emblem, shone
But when it glitter'd o'er the saddle-bow,
They madly hurl'd together on the bridge ,
And Gareth overthrew him, lighted, drew,
There met him drawn, and overthrew him again,
But up like fire he started and as oft
As Gareth brought him grovelling on his knees,
So many a time he vaulted up again ,
Till Gareth panted hard, and his great heart,
Foredooming all his trouble was in vain,
Labour'd within him, for he seem'd as one
That all in later, sadder age begins
To war against ill uses of a life,
But these from all his life arise, and cry,
'Thou hast made us lords, and canst not put us down'
He half despairs , so Gareth seem'd to strike
Vainly, the damsel clamouring all the while,
'Well done, knave-knight, well stricken, O good knight-
knave—

O knave, as noble as any of all the knights—
Shame me not, shame me not. I have prophesied—
Strike, thou art worthy of the Table Round—
His arms are old, he trusts the harden'd skin—
Strike—strike—the wind will never change again.'
And Gareth hearing ever stronglier smote,
And hew'd great pieces of his armour off him,
But lash'd in vain against the harden'd skin,
And could not wholly bring him under, more
Than loud Southwesterns, rolling ridge on ridge,
The buoy that rides at sea, and dips and springs
For ever; till at length Sir Gareth's brand
Clash'd his, and brake it utterly to the hilt.
'I have thee now;' but forth that other sprang,
And, all unknightlike, writhed his wiry arms
Around him, till he felt, despite his mail,
Strangled, but straining ev'n his uttermost
Cast, and so hurl'd him headlong o'er the bridge
Down to the river, sink or swim, and cried,
'Lead, and I follow.'

But the damsel said,
'I lead no longer; ride thou at my side;
Thou art the kingliest of all kitchen-knaves.

'"O trefoil, sparkling on the rainy plain,
O rainbow with three colours after rain,
Shine sweetly: thrice my love hath smiled on me."

'Sir,—and, good faith' I fain had added—Knight,
But that I heard thee call thyself a knave,—
Shamed am I that I so rebuked, reviled,
Missaid thee; noble I am; and thought the King
Scorn'd me and mine; and now thy pardon, friend,
For thou hast ever answer'd courteously,
And wholly bold thou art, and meek withal

As any of Arthur's best, but, being knave,
Hast mazed my wit: I marvel what thou art.'

'Damsel,' he said, 'you be not all to blame,
Saving that you mistrusted our good King
Would handle scorn, or yield you, asking, one
Not fit to cope your quest You said your say;
Mine answer was my deed. Good sooth! I hold
He scarce is knight, yea but half-man, nor meet
To fight for gentle damsel, he, who lets
His heart be stirr'd with any foolish heat
At any gentle damsel's waywardness.
Shamed? care not! thy foul sayings fought for me·
And seeing now thy words are fair, methinks
There rides no knight, not Lancelot, his great self,
Hath force to quell me.'

Nigh upon that hour
When the lone hern forgets his melancholy,
Lets down his other leg, and stretching, dreams
Of goodly supper in the distant pool,
Then turn'd the noble damsel smiling at him,
And told him of a cavern hard at hand,
Where bread and baken meats and good red wine
Of Southland, which the Lady Lyonors
Had sent her coming champion, waited him.

Anon they past a narrow comb wherein
Were slabs of rock with figures, knights on horse
Sculptured, and deckt in slowly-waning hues.
'Sir Knave, my knight, a hermit once was here,
Whose holy hand hath fashion'd on the rock
The war of Time against the soul of man.
And yon four fools have suck'd their allegory
From these damp walls, and taken but the form.

Know ye not these?' and Gareth lookt and read—
In letters like to those the vexillary
Hath left crag-carven o'er the streaming Gelt—
'PHOSPHORUS,' then 'MERIDIES'—'HESPERUS'—
'NOX'—'MORS,' beneath five figures, armed men,
Slab after slab, their faces forward all,
And running down the Soul, a Shape that fled
With broken wings, torn raiment and loose hair,
For help and shelter to the hermit's cave.
'Follow the faces, and we find it. Look,
Who comes behind?'

For one—delay'd at first
Thro' helping back the dislocated Kay
To Camelot, then by what thereafter chanced,
The damsel's headlong error thro' the wood—
Sir Lancelot, having swum the river-loops—
His blue shield-lions cover'd—softly drew
Behind the twain, and when he saw the star
Gleam, on Sir Gareth's turning to him, cried,
'Stay, felon knight, I avenge me for my friend.'
And Gareth crying prick'd against the cry;
But when they closed—in a moment—at one touch
Of that skill'd spear, the wonder of the world—
Went sliding down so easily, and fell,
That when he found the grass within his hands
He laugh'd; the laughter jarr'd upon Lynette:
Harshly she ask'd him, 'Shamed and overthrown,
And tumbled back into the kitchen-knave,
Why laugh ye? that ye blew your boast in vain?'
'Nay, noble damsel, but that I, the son
Of old King Lot and good Queen Bellicent,
And victor of the bridges and the ford,
And knight of Arthur, here lie thrown by whom
I know not, all thro' mere unhappiness—
Device and sorcery and unhappiness—

Out, sword; we are thrown!' And Lancelot answer'd. 'Prince,
O Gareth—thro' the mere unhappiness
Of one who came to help thee, not to harm,
Lancelot, and all as glad to find thee whole,
As on the day when Arthur knighted him.'

Then Gareth, 'Thou—Lancelot!—thine the hand
That threw me? An some chance to mar the boast
Thy brethren of thee make—which could not chance—
Had sent thee down before a lesser spear,
Shamed had I been, and sad—O Lancelot—thou!'

Whereat the maiden, petulant, 'Lancelot,
Why came ye not, when call'd? and wherefore now
Come ye, not call'd? I gloried in my knave,
Who being still rebuked, would answer still
Courteous as any knight—but now, if knight,
The marvel dies, and leaves me fool'd and trick'd,
And only wondering wherefore play'd upon.
And doubtful whether I and mine be scorn'd.
Where should be truth if not in Arthur's hall,
In Arthur's presence? Knight, knave, prince and fool,
I hate thee and for ever.'

And Lancelot said,
'Blessed be thou, Sir Gareth! knight art thou
To the King's best wish. O damsel, be you wise
To call him shamed, who is but overthrown?
Thrown have I been, nor once, but many a time.
Victor from vanquish'd issues at the last,
And overthrower from being overthrown.
With sword we have not striven, and thy good horse
And thou are weary, yet not less I felt
Thy manhood thro' that wearied lance of thine.
Well hast thou done; for all the stream is freed,

And thou hast wreak'd his justice on his foes,
And when reviled, hast answer'd graciously,
And makest merry when overthrown. Prince, Knight,
Hail, Knight and Prince, and of our Table Round!'

And then when turning to Lynette he told
The tale of Gareth, petulantly she said,
'Ay well—ay well—for worse than being fool'd
Of others, is to fool one's self. A cave,
Sir Lancelot, is hard by, with meats and drinks
And forage for the horse, and flint for fire.
But all about it flies a honeysuckle.
Seek, till we find.' And when they sought and found,
Sir Gareth drank and ate, and all his life
Past into sleep; on whom the maiden gazed.
'Sound sleep be thine! sound cause to sleep hast thou.
Wake lusty! Seem I not as tender to him
As any mother? Ay, but such a one
As all day long hath rated at her child,
And vext his day, but blesses him asleep—
Good lord, how sweetly smells the honeysuckle
In the hush'd night, as if the world were one
Of utter peace, and love, and gentleness!
O Lancelot, Lancelot'—and she clapt her hands—
'Full merry am I to find my goodly knave
Is knight and noble. See now, sworn have I,
Else yon black felon had not let me pass,
To bring thee back to do the battle with him.
Thus an thou goest, he will fight thee first;
Who doubts thee victor? so will my knight-knave
Miss the full flower of this accomplishment.'

Said Lancelot, 'Peradventure he, you name,
May know my shield. Let Gareth, an he will,
Change his for mine, and take my charger, fresh,
Not to be spurr'd, loving the battle as well

As he that rides him.' 'Lancelot-like,' she said,
'Courteous in this, Lord Lancelot, as in all.'

And Gareth, wakening, fiercely clutch'd the shield;
'Ramp ye lance-splintering lions, on whom all spears
Are rotten sticks! ye seem agape to roar!
Yea, ramp and roar at leaving of your lord!—
Care not, good beasts, so well I care for you
O noble Lancelot, from my hold on these
Streams virtue—fire—thro' one that will not shame
Even the shadow of Lancelot under shield.
Hence, let us go'

Silent the silent field
They traversed. Arthur's harp tho' summer-wan,
In counter motion to the clouds, allured
The glance of Gareth dreaming on his liege.
A star shot 'Lo,' said Gareth, 'the foe falls!'
An owl whoopt: 'Hark the victor pealing there!'
Suddenly she that rode upon his left
Clung to the shield that Lancelot lent him, crying,
'Yield, yield him this again 'tis he must fight
I curse the tongue that all thro' yesterday
Reviled thee, and hath wrought on Lancelot now
To lend thee horse and shield wonders ye have done;
Miracles ye cannot here is glory enow
In having flung the three I see thee maim'd,
Mangled, I swear thou canst not fling the fourth.'

'And wherefore, damsel? tell me all ye know.
You cannot scare me, nor rough face, or voice,
Brute bulk of limb, or boundless savagery
Appal me from the quest.'

'Nay, Prince,' she cried,
'God wot, I never look'd upon the face,

Seeing he never rides abroad by day;
But watch'd him have I like a phantom pass
Chilling the night: nor have I heard the voice.
Always he made his mouthpiece of a page
Who came and went, and still reported him
As closing in himself the strength of ten,
And when his anger tare him, massacring
Man, woman, lad and girl—yea, the soft babe!
Some hold that he hath swallow'd infant flesh,
Monster! O Prince, I went for Lancelot first,
The quest is Lancelot's: give him back the shield.'

Said Gareth laughing, 'An he fight for this,
Belike he wins it as the better man:
Thus—and not else!'

But Lancelot on him urged
All the devisings of their chivalry
When one might meet a mightier than himself;
How best to manage horse, lance, sword and shield,
And so fill up the gap where force might fail
With skill and fineness. Instant were his words.

Then Gareth, 'Here be rules. I know but one—
To dash against mine enemy and to win.
Yet have I watch'd thee victor in the joust,
And seen thy way.' 'Heaven help thée,' sigh'd Lynette.

Then for a space, and under cloud that grew
To thunder-gloom palling all stars, they rode
In converse till she made her palfrey halt,
Lifted an arm, and softly whisper'd, 'There.'
And all the three were silent seeing, pitch'd
Beside the Castle Perilous on flat field,
A huge pavilion like a mountain peak

Sunder the gloomy crimson on the marge,
Black, with black banner, and a long black horn
Beside it hanging; which Sir Gareth graspt,
And so, before the two could hinder him,
Sent all his heart and breath thro' all the horn.
Echo'd the walls; a light twinkled; anon
Came lights and lights, and once again he blew;
Whereon were hollow tramplings up and down
And muffled voices heard, and shadows past;
Till high above him, circled with her maids,
The Lady Lyonors at a window stood,
Beautiful among lights, and waving to him
White hands, and courtesy; but when the Prince
Three times had blown—after long hush—at last—
The huge pavilion slowly yielded up,
Thro' those black foldings, that which housed therein.
High on a nightblack horse, in nightblack arms,
With white breast-bone, and barren ribs of Death,
And crown'd with fleshless laughter—some ten steps—
In the half-light—thro' the dim dawn—advanced
The monster, and then paused, and spake no word.

But Gareth spake and all indignantly,
'Fool, for thou hast, men say, the strength of ten,
Canst thou not trust the limbs thy God hath given,
But must, to make the terror of thee more,
Trick thyself out in ghastly imageries
Of that which Life hath done with, and the clod,
Less dull than thou, will hide with mantling flowers
As if for pity?' But he spake no word,
Which set the horror higher a maiden swoon'd,
The Lady Lyonors wrung her hands and wept,
As doom'd to be the bride of Night and Death,
Sir Gareth's head prickled beneath his helm,
And ev'n Sir Lancelot thro' his warm blood felt
Ice strike, and all that mark'd him were aghast.

At once Sir Lancelot's charger fiercely neigh'd,
And Death's dark war-horse bounded forward with him.
Then those that did not blink the terror, saw
That Death was cast to ground, and slowly rose.
But with one stroke Sir Gareth split the skull.
Half fell to right and half to left and lay.
Then with a stronger buffet he clove the helm
As throughly as the skull; and out from this
Issued the bright face of a blooming boy
Fresh as a flower new-born, and crying, 'Knight,
Slay me not: my three brethren bad me do it,
To make a horror all about the house,
And stay the world from Lady Lyonors.
They never dream'd the passes would be past.'
Answer'd Sir Gareth graciously to one
Not many a moon his younger, 'My fair child,
What madness made thee challenge the chief knight
Of Arthur's hall?' 'Fair Sir, they bad me do it.
They hate the King, and Lancelot, the King's friend,
They hoped to slay him somewhere on the stream,
They never dream'd the passes could be past.'

Then sprang the happier day from underground;
And Lady Lyonors and her house, with dance
And revel and song, made merry over Death,
As being after all their foolish fears
And horrors only proven a blooming boy.
So large mirth lived and Gareth won the quest.

And he that told the tale in older times
Says that Sir Gareth wedded Lyonors,
But he, that told it later, says Lynette.

NOTES.

1. **The last tall son of Lot and Bellicent.** Lot is in the romances the King of Lothian and Orkney, who had married the eldest of the three daughters of Gorlois and Ygerne. Ygerne was mother of King Arthur cp *The Coming of Arthur*, 184-191 :—

> "Sir, for ye know that in King Uther's time
> The prince and warrior Gorlois, he that held
> Tintagil castle by the Cornish sea,
> Was wedded with a winsome wife, Ygerne
> [illegible] hereof,

[illegible] that [illegible] the [illegible] the [illegible] who married Lot (the second according to this romance). Malory [illegible]

2 **Gareth** So the name is given by Malory, but in the French romances it appears generally as Guerrehes, and is too apt to be confused with the name of his brother Gaharies

In a showerful spring It has often been remarked that the *Idylls of the King* follow in a certain sense the round of a year, so that the story of Arthur, though extending of course in reality over many years, makes a kind of progress through the seasons, which begins with the birth of Arthur on "the night of the new year," and ends with

the last great battle, fought on the very last day of the year, as we know from the last line of the Idylls, "And the new sun rose bringing the new year." These and other indications not only suggest the sympathy of external nature with the hero and his achievements, but also remind us of the sun-myth out of which perhaps the story of Arthur partly grew: compare the lines of the coronation song in the *Coming of Arthur*, 496:—

"Blow, for our Sun is mighty in his May!
Blow, for our Sun is mightier day by day!"

and the description of Arthur in the *Last Tournament*:—

"His hair, a sun that ray'd from off a brow
Like hillsnow high in heaven,"

and in the *Passing of Arthur*, 384:—

"the light and lustrous curls,
That made his forehead like a rising sun
High from the daïs-throne."

Observe also the metaphor of "an eagle-flight" to "the great Sun of Glory" used by Gareth below, l. 22, which indirectly suggests the same idea. This idyll opens with early spring, and it is latter spring when Gareth goes up to Arthur's court, which is then in the spring-time of its glory.

3. **spate.** The flood-water of a river or torrent is called in Scotland the "spate." The word is Celtic in origin, cp. the Irish *speid*, "a great flood" (Skeat, *Dict. of English Etymology*). The use of the word here is a piece of local colour.

5. **as a false knight.** The hurrying of the rhythm suggests the eagerness of the speaker.

6. **if lance Were mine to use.** The lance was the characteristic weapon of the knight: Gareth's thoughts are fixed on his desire to be a knight of Arthur.

8. **Bearing all down in thy precipitancy.** The rhythm is suited to the sense: so in *Geraint and Enid*—

"Went slipping down horrible precipices."

10. **And mine is living blood,** *i.e.* "that which flows in my veins." He has been inwardly comparing the force of the torrent stream with that of his own impulses, which at present finds no outlet, and this suggests the thought that the living blood in his veins ought to have a more passionate flow than the cold and lifeless current, and stir him to more vehement action than that of the stream filled only with the melted snows. Observe how the scenery and surroundings are in keeping with the action and emotions of the poem.

11. **not knowest,** for "knowest not," or "dost not know."

12. **wit,** *i.e.* 'knowledge.'

"Devant toz les buens chevaliérs
Doit estre Gauvains li premiers,
Li seconz Erec li fiz Lac
Et li tierz Lanceloz del Lac." 1691-1694.

In the *Roman de Lancelot* we are told that he was famed for his kindness to the poor and for his courtesy especially to ladies, with regard to whom he was under a special vow, taken because he once killed a lady by accident, never to refuse help to a lady unless her request were against his honour. For this reason he was called "li chevaliers as demoiselles," and his death was lamented as the greatest loss to dames and demoiselles that they ever sustained. In the *Roman de la Rose* and also by Chaucer he is cited as an example of courtesy, *e.g. Squieres Tale*, 93:—

"With so hy reverence and obeisance
As well in speche as in contenance,
That Gawayn with his olde curteisye,
Though he were come ageyn out of Fairye,
Ne coude him nat amende with a word."

His strength waxed and waned within a certain period, "Telle étoit sa coutume che toujours empiroit sa force entour midy; et sitost comme midy étoit passé, si lui revenoit au double le cœur, la force et la vertu": cp. Malory, *Morte Darthur*, 4, 18, who, however, following the *Roman de Merlin*, says that his strength waxed from nine o'clock up to noon, and waned from noon to evensong. The *Roman de Lancelot* adds that he was negligent of his religious duties, and this point is developed in other romances so that he often plays the part of fearful example, see for instance *Morte Darthur*, 16, 5. Tennyson has placed him in a distinctly lower rank, and though still brilliant in achievements and graceful in manner, he becomes the type of levity, irreligion, disloyalty to promises and inconstancy in love:

"then from where he sat
At Arthur's right, with smiling face arose,
With smiling face and frowning heart, a Prince
In the mid might and flourish of his May,
Gawain, surnamed The Courteous, fair and strong,
And after Lancelot, Tristram and Geraint
And Gareth, a good knight, but therewithal
Sir Modred's brother, and the child of Lot
Nor often loyal to his word."

Lancelot and Elaine, 549-557.

He very soon "wearied of the quest" both of Lancelot and of the Holy Grail, though he swore "louder than the rest"; and, in *Pelleas and Ettarre*, though indignant at seeing three against one, he is guilty of the grossest treachery to the man whom he offers to help, and avows his inconstancy in love without scruple:—

"'Art thou not he whom men call light of love?'
'Ay,' said Gawain, 'for women be so light'."

After his death his ghost is "blown along a wandering wind," like the carnal sinners of the *Inferno*.

"Light was Gawain in life, and light in death
Is Gawain, for the ghost is as the man."

Passing of Arthur, 56.

[illegible]

eavesdropping, both when he was a boy and afterwards when on the watch for some scandal in the court, and finally of his treachery to Arthur in usurping the throne when left in charge of the kingdom He "struck for the throne and striking found his doom," but involved Arthur in the same material ruin.

27. proven, "tried", so in l 568

[illegible]

34 tho' ye count me still the child, "yet hear this which I

[illegible]

37. an for "if" is especially common in Tennyson two more instances occur within the next dozen lines

[illegible]

remembering the metaphor of l. 20

45. palm, as symbolical of victory

46 Book of Hours The services and prayers for the seven canonical hours of the day, matins, prime, tierce, sext, nones, vespers, and compline, are called "Hours"; and this was

a book containing them with illuminated initial letters, like that book of Saxon poetry which Alfred earned by reciting its contents. Gareth could not know a palm-tree except from a picture.

47. **haunting**, from French *hanter*, "to frequent," means here "coming constantly." Usually the word is transitive in English as in French, but Shakspeare has, "I have charged thee not to haunt about my doors" (*Othello*, 1, 1, 96), and so Tennyson in the *Princess*, 4, 44:—

"If indeed there haunt
About the moulder'd lodges of the Past
So sweet a voice."

51. **a leash of kings.** A leash is properly a thong to hold in dogs or falcons. (French *laisse*, from Low Latin *laxa*, a "loose rope," Skeat, *Etym. Dict.*) Three dogs are usually held together in a leash, cp. Shaksp. *Henry V.* Prologue l. 6:—

"and at his heels,
Leash'd in like hounds, should famine, sword and fire
Crouch for employment."

Hence the word is used slightingly for three (or perhaps more) persons taken together, as "brace" for two, cp. Shaks. *1 Henry IV.* 2, 4, 7, "I am sworn brother to a leash of drawers, and can call them all by their christen names, as Tom, Dick, and Francis."

56. **clomb**, a favourite form both with Spenser and Tennyson:—

"And asked, to what end they clomb that tedious height."
Faery Queene, 1, 10, 49.

"but oft
Clomb to the roofs and gazed alone for hours
On that disastrous leaguer." *Princess*, 7, 16.

58. **past.** This is the form of spelling preferred by Tennyson in this word and a few others, *e.g.* "vext," "slipt," "fixt," probably after the example of Spenser, though in many others, *e.g.* "kist," "chaft," "flockt," "chaunst," he has not followed that example. For "past away" meaning "died," cp. *In Memoriam*, 90, 13:—"But if they came who past away."

59. **had**, *i.e.* "would have," so "had ventured," l. 64, "had doomed thee," l. 366. The meaning is, "If that one who caught him back had indeed loved him, he would have run the risk himself to obtain the treasure for him over whose safety he was watching."

61. **And Gareth answered her etc.** This repetition of l. 41 is in the epic style, like the similar repetitions in the *Passing of Arthur* of such lines as

"Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere":
or "And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere."

62. **he, or she** He would suggest that the character in his apologue who had been referred to by his mother under a male personification, "True love had risk'd himself," might possibly be female

64. **had ventured—had the thing etc.** Tennyson is fond of this concise form of conditional, *e g*

> "O friend, had I been holpen half as well
> By this King Arthur as by thee to day,
> Then beast and man had had their share of me"
> *Coming of Arthur*, 160.

> "Had I chosen to wed,
> I had been wedded earlier" *Lancelot and Elaine.*

66. **the brand Excalibur** "brand," which means properly a burning piece of wood, is used poetically in English (as *brandr* in Icelandic) for "sword," from its blade flashing like fire. The word is especially appropriate to Excalibur,—

> "the blade so bright
> That men are blinded by it"

[illegible]

preserved its wearer from being wounded in battle. Malory says that it gave light like thirty torches, and Tennyson describes how, when cast away,

> "The great brand [illegible]

The name Excalibur is said in the romances to mean "Cut-steel" It is also written "Caliburn" Mr Rowe in his note to *The Coming of Arthur*, l 294, writes, "The notion of enchanted armour is found in many old poets and romancers of various nations. In the *Mahabarat* the magic bow of Arjuna is described under the name *Gandiva*, and Mukta Phalaketu in the *Kathá Sarit Ságara* (chap. 115) is presented by Siva with a sword named *Invincible*" *He adds the names of some of the most celebrated* swords of romance, *e g* Lancelot's sword called *Aroundight*, Siegfried's *Balmung*, Charlemagne's *Joyeuse*, Orlando's *Durindana*, The Cid's *Colada*.

68. **fowl is often, as here, collective, meaning "birds."** So in the *Princess*,—"To scare the fowl from fruit"; cp. Shaksp. *Cymb* 1, 4, 97 .—"strange fowl light upon neighbouring ponds."

74. **like a log**: that is, like a log which has been laid upon the fire, and has almost burnt itself out, but smoulders still, burning with smoke but no flame. According to the romances Lot was killed in the second war against Arthur, by Pellinore, father of Lamorack and Percival, for which cause both Pellinore and Lamorack were treacherously killed by Gawain and his brothers (except Gareth), see *Morte Darthur*, 2, 10; 10, 58, and 11, 10.

76. **the Barons' war** is that which is described in the *Coming of Arthur*, ll. 63-133.

78. **His age hath slowly drooped** etc., that is, "his life has drooped and his aged body now lies there," a rather bold expression.

79. **unburiable.** He cannot be buried because he is not actually dead. He has indeed no more active life in him than the yet-warm corpse of one who is just dead, and yet we cannot bury him away out of sight and rid ourselves of the pain of seeing him thus.

80. **no more,** *i.e.* no more than a corpse, the words "and yet unburiable" being parenthetical and closely belonging to the word "corpse."

82. **Albeit** refers to the thought of the speaker rather than to the actual expression: "I speak of their absence as a loss to me, although indeed their presence would not reconcile me to the loss of you."

84. **red berries charm the bird.** The argument is meant as a skilful appeal to Gareth's aspirations after manhood, representing the jousts and the wars as childish sports which please his youthful fancy, attracting him as red berries attract a bird, while the true diversion of a man is the chase, and his proper occupation is to be the head of a family: but the effect of the argument is spoiled by the evident fear with which she regards the sports which she affects to consider trifling and childish, and by a display of anxiety for the life and limb of her "innocent," which makes him feel all the more strongly that he is treated still like a child. The "red berries" are those which in the English winter supply food for the birds, as holly berries, hips and haws, mountain-ash berries, etc.

85. **jousts,** from the Old French *jouster*, "to tilt," Low Latin *juxtare*, "to come together," Latin, *iuxta*, "close to" (Skeat, *Etym. Dict.*).

87. **an often chance** etc. "Often" is used in older English as an adjective meaning "many" or "frequent," especially in the phrase "often times." For the form of expression cp. *Geraint and Enid*, 330:—

"Your beauty is no beauty to him now:
A common chance"

The argument here used by Bellicent is that which appeals most to herself, but it would be less likely than any other to persuade the high spirited youth to whom it was addressed.

88 **tourney-falls** · "*tourney*" *is the Old French tornei, from torner*, "to turn about"

89 **Frights to my heart**, refers to "the brain stunning shocks, and tourney falls" mentioned in the preceding line, and is grammatically in apposition to those words

90. **By these tall firs etc** Unconsciously she is calling up before his mind the very scene in presence of which he had most strongly felt the impulse to be gone

burns, "streams"; in older English *bourne*, akin to the German *brunnen*, "spring" (Skeat, *Etym Dict*) The word is used commonly in Scotland and in the north of England, *e g*

"We twa ha' paidlit in the burn."

Therefore it is the more appropriate here

[illegible]

married life as the best objects to be aimed at, and most of all when she gives as a final reason for staying, "ye are yet more boy than man"

92. **thee**, *i e.* "for thee" the pronoun forms, "me," "thee," "*us*," "*you*," "*them*" *are originally datives as well as accusatives*, while "him" was originally the dative only Hence the common use of all these words as indirect object without preposition, not only in such expressions as "who lent me thee" (1055), "I will find thee a bride," but also in phrases like "woe is me," "well is thee," "tho' him were loth," etc

93. **comfortable**, that is, one apt to support and strengthen cp Shaksp *Romeo and Jul* 5, 3, 148, where Juliet waking exclaims, "O comfortable friar! where is my lord?" Low Latin *comfortare*, "to strengthen"

94 **climbing life** prone year The metaphor is from the course of the sun in the heaven, youth is the ascending and age the declining arc "prone" means "inclined downwards," and is used in Latin of the heavenly bodies or the day moving towards their setting:

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"Sed vides quanto trepidet tumultu
Pronus Orion." Hor. *Od.* 3, 27, 17.

100. **For.** This use of "for" in introducing a story (in which Tennyson has apparently imitated the Greek use of γάρ) may be illustrated from *Coming of Arthur*, 184,

"Sir, for ye know that in King Arthur's time," etc.;

l. 358,

"But let me tell thee now another tale;
For Bleys, our Merlin's master," etc.;

and *Passing of Arthur*, l. 6,

"For on their march to westward," etc.

See also below, l. 119.

101. **Ask'd for a bride.** Gareth takes up his mother's hint of a bride, and upon it hangs this apologue of Fame and Shame.

104. **But to be won by force**; *i.e.* "not to be won but by force": "but" properly means "except only." Here, however, it is used as if it meant "only."

105. **good lack**: "lack" in older English from meaning "want" comes to have sometimes the meaning "failure," "fault," or "shame." Cp. Lyndesay, *Monarche*, 3, 4514,

"That nobyll Empriour gart ly down
Apone his wambe, with schame and lake":

"good" seems to be in this expression merely a strengthening expletive, as in such phrases as "good earnest," "good sooth," "good truth," *e.g.*

"Harbourage? truth, good truth, I know not, save,
It may be at Earl Yniol's." *Marriage of Geraint*, 290.

107. **save**, *i.e.* "except," as in the line quoted just above: a "saving clause" is an exception.

110. **That evermore she longed to hide herself**: so in Spenser, *Faery Queene*, 2, 7, 22,

"And Shame his ugly face did hide from living eye."

112. **Yea**, a qualification of the preceding line.

114. **tether'd**, from "tether," "a rope for fastening up"; a Celtic word, from Gaelic *teadhair* (Skeat, *Etym. Dict.*). The proper use of the word in English is of animals tied up in a pasture: cp. Shaksp. *Hamlet*, 1, 3, 125, "with a larger tether may he walk, Than may be given you."

116. **follow the Christ, the King.** Arthur is distinctively the Christian King, "The King will follow Christ, and we the King," sang the Knighthood at his coronation, "To break the heathen

and uphold the Christ" (*Guinevere*, 466) was part of the oath taken by his knights, whose battle-cry was "Christ and the King" (*Lancelot and Elaine*, 304). The King, in fact, as an [illegible]

Christ, the Son of God"

117 **Live pure, speak true, right wrong** the same which is expressed in the lines which follow that quoted above from *Guinevere*,—

> "To ride abroad redressing human wrongs,
> To speak no slander, no, nor listen to it,
> To honour his own word as if his God's,
> To lead sweet lives in purest chastity."

119. **Sweet son, for there be many etc.** As if she had said, "Yet hear me again, for there be many," as Gareth had said, l. 99

> "Hear yet once more the story of the child,
> For, mother, there was once" etc

[illegible] suggestions of ease in staying at home and risk in going are very ill-adapted to their purpose

120 **Or will not deem him** implying that their judgment was warped by wilfulness, and not a sincere conclusion. [illegible]

> "And those first times had golden hours for me,
> For then I surely thought he would be King"

122 **frequent**, i e "constantly in company" so in Latin [illegible] "more often in [illegible] al it means [illegible] so in Shaksp [illegible] his princely exercises than formerly he hath appeared", and in Tennyson's *Deserted House* —

"And no murmur at the door,
So frequent on its hinge before."

124. **no more than he, himself**: that is, "no more than he doubted himself."

125. **Of closest kin to me**; that is, she was convinced that he was the son of her mother, Ygerne, but whether the son of Gorloïs or of Uther would still remain a question. Bellicent implicitly rejects both the story of a miraculous origin and the opinion that he was born of another mother, *e.g.* of the wife of Anton (or Ector), an opinion based in part upon his unlikeness to Ygerne, see *Coming of Arthur*, 325-330.

128. **till the cloud ... Hath lifted.** We are reminded of King Leodogran's vision in the *Coming of Arthur* of the haze-hidden peak with its phantom King "now looming and now lost," till in a moment

"his dream was changed, the haze
Descended, and the solid earth became
As nothing, but the King stood out in heaven,
Crown'd."

130. **quickly**, being stirred to impatience by the disloyal suggestion of doubt. "Not an hour," breaks from him impetuously, but is qualified at once by the feeling of dutiful regard for his mother, which is always strong within him.

131. **So that**, *i.e.* "provided that," "if"; a common use of "so" or "so that" in Tennyson: *e.g.* "so ye care to learn," *Coming of Arthur*, 183, and below, l. 146.

133. **who swept the dust etc.** "Do ye say that *he* is not proven King, who" etc. The reference is to Arthur's refusal of truage and tribute to the Romans:—

"Seeing that ye be grown too weak and old
To drive the heathen from your Roman wall,
No tribute will we pay": *Coming of Arthur*, 510 ff.

and his subsequent victories over them, as related in the romances.

135. **the Idolaters** are the Saxons, "Sessoins" or "Saracens" (*i.e.* infidels), as they are called in the romances. Arthur had overcome them in "twelve great battles," see *Lancelot and Elaine*, 283-316.

140. **Will ye walk thro' fire?** Taking up Gareth's parenthetical exclamation,

"I will walk thro' fire,
Mother, to gain it,"

she proposes to him "the sooty yoke o[illegible]"
This taking up of a casual expression and [illegible]
is characteristic of Tennyson's dramatic sty[illegible]

147. **the quick**: "quick" properly means "living" ("the quick and the dead," "They went down quick into the pit," "Thou 'rt quick, But yet I'll bury thee"); cp. "quicken'd" in l. 181; hence "the quick" is "the living flesh" of the body, as opposed to hard skin, nails, etc., which are less sensitive "I am struck to the quick" (Shaksp *Temp* 5, 1, 25) means "I am deeply moved"; "to prove to the quick" is to prove by a stroke which wounds deeply and in a sensitive part

150 **for**, i.e. "in return for." He should receive no wages but his food for his service

151 **scullions** a "scullion" is properly a "dish clout," from Old French *escouillon*, dimin. derived from Lat *scopa* "a broom" then the name was transferred from the thing to the person who used it It is said not to be allied to "scullery" in derivation, see Skeat, *Etym Dict*

kitchen knaves "knave" is originally "boy" (cp. Germ *knabe*), hence "servant" In the *Morte Darthur* "kitchen boy," "kitchen knave," and "kitchen page" are used as convertible terms in this story.

152. **across the bar**; that is, the bar between the kitchen and the banqueting hall The "kitchen boys" would carry the dishes to this bar and then hand them to those who served at the tables

154 **a twelvemonth and a day** This extra day has a place in various rules and usages, as for instance in the wearing widow's weeds It is due no doubt to the desire to make sure that the full time of a year, or whatever it may be, has been accomplished · cp Shaksp *Love's Labour's Lost*, 5, 2, 837 —

"a twelvemonth and a day
I mark no words that smooth faced wooers say"

155 **so**, explained by the clauses which follow, "that when her son" etc.

157. **villain**, "servile," originally from Low Latin *villanus*, "farm servant," "serf" hence in French and in English the word came to mean "base," "bad," helped perhaps by confusion with "vile"

158. **princely proud.** Tennyson is fond of these adjective compounds, forming them often with alliteration so we have "royal-rich," "dewy-dark," "tenderest-touching," "friendly-warm," "dusty-dry," "human amorous," cp Spenser's "dreadest-dangerous," *Faery Queene*, 4. 2, 32, and so in Shakspeare, "active-valiant," "valiant-young," "beauteous evil," "kingly-poor."

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155. **so**, explained by the clauses which follow, "that when her son" etc.

157. **villain**, "servile," originally from Low Latin *villanus*, "farm servant," "serf": hence in French and in English the word came to mean "base," "bad," helped perhaps by confusion with "vile."

158. **princely proud** Tennyson is fond of these adjective compounds, forming them often with alliteration so we have [illegible]

poor.

159. **To pass thereby**, *sc.* to glory.

162. **thrall** is used here both as subs. and adj. "The thrall in person" means in fact "The thrall who in person is bound to service." The word is derived from a stem meaning "run," and properly means "one who runs" on messages.

169. **Gareth awhile linger'd.** The pause after the trochaic rhythm of "linger'd" produces upon our ear the effect of hesitating purpose.

170. **wistful**: originally a corruption of "wishful," meaning "eager" or "longing": "wistful fear" is "anxious fear," longing that that may not happen which is feared.

172. **his outward purpose**, *i.e.* "his purpose to depart."

174. **on to dawn**, as if this were the goal after which it strove, as Gareth's soul after the dawn of his new day of manhood, cp. *In Mem.* 95, 53 ff. (where however the breeze which blows to dawn is less violent and loud):—

"And suck'd from out the distant gloom
A breeze began to tremble o'er
The large leaves of the sycamore,
And fluctuate all the still perfume,

And gathering freshlier overhead,
Rock'd the full-foliaged elms, and swung
The heavy-folded rose, and flung
The lilies to and fro, and said

'The dawn, the dawn,' and died away."

176. **still**, "continually."

180. Observe the irregular rhythm and liquid sounds.

182. **Kindled into flowers**: one of the picturesque metaphors which are most characteristic of Tennyson. For the idea cp. *Œnone*, l. 94—

"And at their feet the crocus brake like fire."

The later season is in harmony with Gareth's development into manhood.

185. **broaden'd**: cp. *Guinevere*, 80 (where in her dreams the Queen sees her own shadow spreading over all the land):—

"When lo her own, that broadening from her feet,
And blackening, swallow'd all the land."

Camelot is the place where Arthur chiefly holds his court. Caxton in his preface to Malory's *Morte Darthur* speaks of it as if it were in Wales, probably confusing it with Caerleon, but Malory himself identifies it with Winchester. There was, however, a Camelot or Camalat in Somersetshire, represented

now by the villages of East Camel and West Camel on the river Camel, which have the remains of an ancient town and [illegible]

"which rose between the forest and the field," on one side the woods over which the king gazed when pacing on the level pavement in front of the hall, the same which in the *Last Tournament* were yellowing with autumn, and on the other the meadows in which the tourneys were held—

"the lists
By Camelot in the meadow" *Lancelot and Elaine.*

The city was approached "over the long backs of the bushless downs," and it is called repeatedly the "dim, rich city", it is

"Camelot, a city of shadowy palaces
And stately, rich in emblem and the work
Of ancient kings who did their days in stone."

The centre of it was the great hall which Merlin had built for Arthur—

"For all the sacred mount of Camelot
And all the dim rich city, roof by roof,
Tower after tower, spire beyond spire,
By grove, and garden lawn, and rushing brook,
Climbs to the mighty hall that Merlin built
Holy Grail, 227-231

With this compare the descriptions given in ll. 189-193 and 299-302 of this idyll. Then in describing the departure of the knights upon the quest, Percivale says—

"O brother, had you known our Camelot,
Built by old kings, age after age, so old

The King himself had fears that it would fall,
So strange, and rich, and dim; for where the roofs
Tottered toward each other in the sky,
Met foreheads all along the street of those
Who watch'd us pass; and lower, and where the long
Rich galleries, lady-laden, weighed the necks
Of dragons clinging to the crazy walls,
Thicker than drops from thunder, showers of flowers
Fell as we past; and men and boys astride
On wyvern, lion, dragon, griffin, swan,
At all the corners named us each by name."
Holy Grail, 339-351.

The approach of Gareth full of youth and enthusiasm to the city seen through the clouds of the "silver-misty morn," may be contrasted with that of Pelleas in his madness of disillusion:—

"when he saw
High up in heaven the hall that Merlin built
Blackening against the dead-green stripes of even,
'Black nest of rats,' he groaned, 'ye build too high.'"
Pelleas and Ettarre.

191. **Prick'd**: cp. *Holy Grail*, 424:—

"the spires
Prick'd with incredible pinnacles into heaven."

the great gate, the weirdly-sculptured "gate of Arthur's wars," of which we shall hear more afterwards.

193. **Anon, the whole fair city.** The rhythm is imitative, becoming more rapid, then slower again.

200. **changeling out of Fairyland.** It is a very widespread popular superstition that fairies are wont to steal human children from cradles and substitute elves or other children. Such creatures are called "changelings," a word which is used by Shakspeare of a substituted letter, "the changeling never known," *Hamlet*, 5, 3, 53, of a child left by the fairies, in *Winter's Tale*, 3, 3, 122, "It was told me I should be rich by the fairies. This is some changeling: open't;" and, in *Midsummer-Night's Dream*, of a child reared by the fairies upon the death of his mother. For the legends about the origin of Arthur reference should be made to the *Coming of Arthur*, 177-236 and 325-410: another is referred to in ll. 487-493 of this idyll. Most of them agree in saying that as a child he was received by Merlin, who provided for his bringing-up; but whether born of Ygerne and delivered immediately after birth to Merlin, or miraculously found on sea-shore or mountain, none knew.

202. **glamour**, *i.e.* "enchantment." The word is used in the same sense in the *Marriage of Geraint*, l. 742:—

"that maiden in the tale,
Whom Gwydion made by glamour out of flowers"

It is said by some to be a corruption of "gramarie," which in older English means first "grammar," and then "magic," from the Old French *gramaire*, the idea being that learning and the magic were closely connected (Skeat, *Etym. Dict.*, *Appendix*). Scott uses the word "gramarye" repeatedly, e g. *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, 3, 14 —

"frighten'd as a child might be,
At the wild yell and visage strange,
And the dark words of gramarye"

It may be doubted however whether this can be the true etymology, in view of the passages in which the word seems to mean an illusion of the senses, especially of the sight; and some connect it with the Icelandic *glam*, meaning "vision" or "visionary"

203 **there is no such city anywhere** Gareth's companions say that the city is all a vision and no reality, because they cannot see it clearly and constantly so, it is suggested, commonplace natures, not exalted by enthusiasm, are ready to deny the existence of ideal objects or the possibility of attaining them

205 **enow** and "enough" come from Old English *genoh* or *genóg* (cp Germ *genug*), whence was derived "inoh" or "enogh"

207. **In the Arabian sea.** We are reminded of the Eastern tales which speak of spirits confined by some great magician, such as Solomon, and cast into the depths of the sea.

209 **there was no gate like it** It is called in the *Holy Grail*, 358, "the gate of the three Queens," and again "the gate of Arthur's wars"; in *Lancelot and Elaine* it is—

"the strange statued gate,
Where Arthur's wars were rendered mystically"

210 **the keystone** of an arch is that stone which is put in last at the centre, and against which both sides of the curve press.

212. **The Lady of the Lake** See the description of her in the *Coming of Arthur*, 282 293 —

Down in a deep; calm, whatsoever storms
May shake the world, and when the surface rolls,
Hath power to walk the waters like our Lord."

Also in *Lancelot and Elaine* she is mentioned as

"the wondrous one
Who passes thro' the visions of the night,"

and who having caught the infant Lancelot from his mother's arms chanted to him "snatches of mysterious hymns." In the romances there are several water-fairies who are called "ladies of the lake," the most prominent being Niviene (in Malory "Nimue"), Tennyson's Vivien, to whom is assigned the bringing-up of Lancelot and the conquest of Merlin. In Tennyson the Lady of the Lake is a far more exalted and mysterious personage than these, and seems to personify the spirit of religion. Here her statue is distinguished by Christian emblems of various kinds, the cross, the water of baptism, the sword of the Spirit, the censer, and the fish.

all her dress wept from her sides. Her dress symbolises the outward forms of religion, which are subject to change like water flowing away, but she herself, with her great and goodly arms extended like the cross, stands ever firm and upholds all the cornice.

wept means here "flowed away in drops," like tears.

216. **drops of water**, apparently the water of baptism, symbolical of the cleansing power of religion.

217. **a sword.** The reference is probably to such sayings as that in the *Epistle to the Hebrews* (4, 12), "the word of God is quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit," and in St. Paul's *Epistle to the Ephesians* (6, 17), "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."

218. **either**, *i.e.* "*each of the two*"; cp. *Coming of Arthur*, 130,

"each had warded either in the fight."

219. **the sacred fish.** The fish was an early symbol of Christianity, partly because of the significance attributed to the letters of the Greek word ΙΧΘΥΣ, which are the initial letters of the phrase Ἰήσους Χριστός Θεοῦ Υἱος Σωτήρ, "Jesus Christ Son of God, Saviour," and partly perhaps because of the connexion of Christianity in its earliest times with fisher-folk. It was especially used at Rome in times of persecution, as a secret watchword among Christians.

221. **Arthur's wars.** Hence the gate is called in the *Holy Grail* "the gate of Arthur's wars." The word "weird" (cp. "weirdly sculptured" in *Lancelot and Elaine*) means properly "fatal," *i.e.* having to do with fate or destiny, from the old

English *wirde* "destiny" connected with Germ. *werden* "to become." In Scotland "the weird is dree'd" means "the destiny is fulfilled." In Tennyson's *Ancient Sage* "that weird casket" is the casket which holds man's destiny. From the mysterious character of destiny is derived the ordinary modern meaning of the word, denoting that which is mysterious and somewhat awful. Here "weird" is nearly equivalent to "mystical," and this gate is referred to more than once as the place

> "Where Arthur's wars are render'd mystically."

Arthur's wars were blazoned in less mysterious fashion upon the windows of the great hall, see *Holy Grail*, 248 ff.

222. co twisted, "twisted together."

as if Time Were nothing Here we have a foreshadowing of the victory which in this idyll the soul of man is to gain over Time.

223 inveterately. The Latin word *inveteratus* (from *vetus* [illegible]

225. three Queens. These are the same who were present at Arthur's coronation, *Coming of Arthur*, 275-278,

> "three fair queens,
> Who stood in silence near his throne, the friends
> Of Arthur, gazing on him, tall, with bright
> Sweet faces, who will help him at his need."

They appear in the *Passing of Arthur*, where they come in a dusky barge to bear him away, 361 ff Tennyson leaves the persons of these three queens, as well as that of the Lady of the Lake, [illegible] the Theo- [illegible] lls us that [illegible] the other [illegible] een of the Waste Lands. *Morte Darthur*, [illegible]

226 should help, *i e.* of whom it had been said "they shall help him at his need," cp *Coming of Arthur*, l 278, to which this passage is a reference, for Gareth, whose impressions are here related, may be supposed to have been familiar with his mother's account of Arthur's coronation, and to recognize here "those three Queens" which she then saw

229 dragon boughts. The word "bought" or "bout" means "bend" or "turn," connected with "bow." Germ *beugen* (Skeat, *Etym. Dict.*). Tennyson no doubt had in his mind the passages of Spenser where it occurs, *e g* *Faery Queene*, 1, 1, 15,

"Her huge long taile her den all overspred,
Yet was in knots and many boughtes upwound,"

and I, 11, 11,

"His huge long tayle wound up in hundred foldes,
Does overspred his long bras-scaly back,
Whose wreathed boughts when ever he unfoldes,
. . . .
It sweepeth all the land behind him farre."

In both which places it is used, as here, of the folds of a dragon's tail.

elvish emblemings: "elvish" (from "elf") denotes something mysterious and grotesque, as well as fairy-like: "emblem," from the Greek ἔμβλημα, which means inlaid work, especially raised ornament on vessels, etc., comes in English to mean symbolical ornament, or symbol.

230. **seethe**, properly "boil," hence of movement like that of water boiling, *e.g.*

"Roll'd to starboard, roll'd to larboard, when the surge was seething free." *Lotos-Eaters*, 151.

234. **Out of the city etc.** The rhythm of these two lines, as well as the structure of the sentences, expresses the suddenness of the sound which startles them.

239. **leaving share in furrow**: "leaving the plough-share lying idle in the furrow." "Share" is from the stem of "shear," meaning "cut," and is that part of the plough which cuts the soil.

241. **(Your city moved so weirdly in the mist)**. This kind of parenthesis, by which the sentence is interrupted in order to throw in an explanation, and then resumed as if there had been no break, is characteristic of Tennyson, *e.g.*,

"Philip stayed
(His father lying sick and needing him)
An hour behind." *Enoch Arden*, 64.

Again in the same poem,

"Philip's true heart, which hunger'd for her peace
(Since Enoch left he had not look'd upon her)
Smote him,"

and in the *Princess*, 5, 126,

"now she lightens scorn
At him that mars her plan, but then would hate
(And every voice she talk'd with ratify it,
And every face she look'd on justify it)
The general foe."

248. **Seer**: properly "one who sees," hence of one who sees [illegible]

playing on him i.e. "making sport of him": cp. *Guinevere*, 308,

> "Lo! they have set her on,
> Our simple seeming Abbess and her nuns,
> To play upon me,"

and *Lancelot and Elaine*, 208, "Surely I but played on Torre." The metaphor is from a musical instrument, as in Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, 3, 2, 380:—"You would play upon me; you would seem to know my stops you would sound me from my lowest note to the top of my compass and there is much music, excellent voice in this little organ; yet cannot you make it speak"

219 **I have seen the good ship etc** He refers to such illusions of the senses as the mirage of the desert and of the sea, when owing to certain conditions of the atmosphere an image of a distant object may often be seen inverted in the air

253 **Take thou the truth as thou hast told it me** This is an ironical reference to the untruth told by Gareth in the lines above, "We be tillers of the soil" etc; see l 253. "I mock thee not but as thou mockest me" He means, "The doubts of which [illegible]

for so the ideals of youth clothe themselves in enchanted forms of poetry and music" So in the *Ancient Sage* it is said of Faith,

> "She finds the fountain where they wail'd 'Mirage'!"

256 **a sacred mountain cleft toward the sunrise** Mr Elsdale says this is Parnassus, the mountain of Apollo and the Muses, with its top cloven into two peaks, and continues "The fairy King and fairy Queens who come from a sacred mountain cleft towards the sunrise, to build the city, are the old mythologies whose birthplace was in the East the land of the rising sun. From them, besides the religions of the ancient world, are derived *poetry, architecture, sculpture, all those elevating and refining* [illegible]

258. **built it to the music of their harps.** So, according to Greek legend, the walls of Troy and Thebes rose to the sound of music, cp. *Œnone*, 39,

"as yonder walls
Rose slowly to a music slowly breathed,

and *Tiresias*, 96,

"the song-built towers and gates" (of Thebes).

260. **there is nothing in it as it seems Saving the King.** All other things but the King belong to that ever-changing world of sense-perception which produces in us illusion; they are not as they seem, just as "thou art not who thou seemest." The meaning is that the ideal alone remains true and unchangeable amid the changing and perishing of material things. The King represents the ideal towards which Gareth is striving, the Sun of Glory up to which he is endeavouring to soar.

261. **some there be etc.** These are those who refuse to see that which is ideal, and hold only to the objects of their sense-perception.

263. **So thou pass**: see note on l. 131: "pass" is of course subjunctive: cp. "So thou dread to swear," just below.

265. **thrall**, "slave," from a stem meaning "run," lit. "runner," *i.e.* one who runs on messages (Skeat, *Etym. Dict.*).

266. **will bind thee by such vows etc.** Those who aim at the highest ideal must strive after a standard of perfection which is impossible indeed to be attained, but must be aimed at if men are to rise above the level of "the cattle of the field."

267. **the which**: a more definite form of the relative, like *lequel* in French and *il quale* in Italian; but in English though we may say "the which," we cannot say "the who."

271. **like enow**, "likely enough." Cp. Shaks. *Much Ado*, 2, 3, 107:—

"*D. Pedro.* May be she doth but counterfeit.
Claud. Faith, like enough!"

"Like" in this sense is far more common than "likely" in Shakspeare and older English.

272. **They are building still**, that is, the enchantment is working, to which ye will become thralls if ye pass the gate.

273. **therefore never built at all.** In one sense it is an unreal shadow, because it eludes the sense perception, but in another sense it is for this very cause eternal, because the ideal, built up of soul-harmonies, is set as an unchangeable object of aspiration.

275. **reverence thine own beard**, "do not dishonour your reverend years by lying."

276. **utter truth**: "perfect truth," so "utter courtesy" in the *Marriage of Geraint*, 381 "utter (or outer) darkness" is a common expression, *e g.* "the son of utter darkness," Shaksp. *1 Henry IV*. 3, 3, 42: it is the comparative of "out" (superl. "*utmost*"), meaning that which goes beyond and outside other things of the same kind

280 **the Riddling of the Bards** "Bard" is a Celtic word meaning "poet"; and it was the name given by the Gauls and Britons to their minstrels, who formed hereditary orders, and laid claim to prophetic gifts Merlin himself was a bard, and Tennyson puts a specimen of bardic utterance in his mouth in the *Coming of Arthur*, 400 ff,

> "He laugh'd as is his wont, and answer'd me
> In riddling triplets of old time."

Prophetic responses have usually something ambiguous about them, and the utterances of the bards were probably no excep- [illegible] *being an actual deception as experienced, and the other an* attempt to deceive others or to avoid discovery of the truth by them.

283 **but**, "except" The word is originally an adverb meaning "outside," cp "about," which also means "outside" (Skeat, *Etym. Dict*).

284 **thou art not who Thou seemest**, *i e* "thou art not the person that thou seemest to be," an elliptical use of the relative.

285. **I know thee who thou art** Cp *Gospel of St Luke*, 4, 34, "I know thee who thou art; the Holy One of God."

287. **brook**, "endure" the original meaning is "use" or "enjoy," cp Germ. *brauchen* In Shaksp *Richard II* 3, 2, 2, it seems to have something of the original meaning —

> "How brooks your grace the air,
> After your late tossing on the breaking seas?"

The transition of meaning may be illustrated by such passages as this.—

> "Ne could she brooke no meat but brothes alone"
> Sackville, *Mirrour for Magistrates*, 49.

288. **Unmockingly**, having changed his tone to a serious one in the last sentence.

291. **white lie.** As a malicious and slanderous untruth is black ("A lie that is half a truth is ever the blackest of lies"), so in common speech a white lie is one which is not intended to do harm to anyone, and is justified by a good motive. Here the popular expression is made picturesque by the image of the little ghost sitting upon the threshold of their enterprise and almost *scaring them away.*

293. **Let love be blamed for it;** *i.e.* the mother's love which endeavoured by exacting this condition to detain him.

294. **good cheer:** "cheer" originally means "face" or "mien," derived apparently through Low Latin from the Greek *κάρα*, "head" (Skeat, *Etym. Dict.*); cp. Ital. *cera*, "complexion." For its use in older English, cp. Chaucer, *Knightes Tale*, 55,—

> "When scho hadde swowned with a dedly chere."

Surrey, *Transl. of Æneid*, 2, 345,—

> "With rufull chere I sawe where Hector stood,"

Spenser, *Faery Queene*, 1, 2, 27,—

> "With chaunge of cheare the seeming simple maid
> Let fal her eyen, as shamefast, to the earth,"

and Shaksp. *1 Henry VI.* 1, 2, 48,—

> "Methinks your looks are sad, your cheer appalled."

So Tennyson says in the *Poet's Mind*, 15,—

> "The flowers would faint at your cruel cheer."

From such expressions as "to be of good cheer," or "to give good cheer" come the meanings of the verb "to cheer" and of the adjective "cheerful."

296. **Camelot, a city of shadowy palaces.** The verse goes thus,

> "Cámelot, | a city | of shád|owy pál|acés|."

The palaces overshadow the narrow streets, and are ancient and richly decorated piles with varying lights and shades.

297. **emblem,** see note on l. 229.

298. **did their days in stone,** *i.e.*, recorded the history of their days in sculptured ornament.

299. **Merlin.** The most famous wizard of medieval romance. So far as the name represents any actual person, he was the Welsh bard Mereddin, at the court of the king "Aurelius Emrys" who is mentioned in l. 367. Merlin himself is also called Ambrose or Emrys. In the cycle of Arthurian romance he plays almost the leading part, directing events by his prophecies and stepping in to solve difficulties by his magic powers. In Tennyson he is

> "the most famous man of all those times,
> Merlin, who knew the range of all their arts,

[illegible]

He received Arthur as an infant, and produced him before the people to be their king; he prophesied that Arthur should not die but "pass, again to come." "Mage" (for "magician") is a name applied to both Merlin and his master Bleys in the *Coming of Arthur*. It is originally from the name of the priestly tribe or caste among the Persians (or Medes). It passed through Greek into Latin because of its use in the *New Testament* to designate the "Wise men from the East" who followed the leading of the star.

301. **tipt with lessening peak etc**, cp. *Holy Grail*, 227 ff.,

> [illegible]

302. **spire** as a verb means to go up in spires, *i e.* "the lessening peaks and pinnacles" which have been spoken of.

305. **Clash'd.** Observe the effect of this monosyllable at the beginning of the line, with a pause after it; cp. *Lancelot and Elaine*, 456:—

> "Meet in the midst and there so furiously
> Shock, that a man far-off might well perceive
> . . . .
> The hard earth shake and a low thunder of arms"

306. **bower**, in older English means "chamber," from *buan*, "to dwell" (Skeat, *Etym. Dict*), cp. Chaucer, *Nonne Prestes Tale*, 12,—

> "Full sooty was hire bour and eke her hall";

and this meaning it preserves in modern poetry, as often in Scott and Tennyson, *e g* *Godiva*, 42,—

> "Then fled she to her inmost bower."

casement is the frame which encloses the window, short for "encasement," from Old French *encaisser* (Skeat, *Etym Dict*)

307. **wholesome stars of love** The metaphor is apparently of the lode star: so Enid's lover (*Geraint and Enid*) addresses her as

> "the pilot star of my lone life,"

cp. Shaksp. *Mids Night's Dream*, 1, 1, 182,—

> "O happy fair!
> our eyes are lode stars,"

and Shelley, *Revolt of Islam*, 2, 21,—

"whose eyes
Were lode-stars of delight, which drew me home."

310-325. With this passage compare the lines in the *Last Tournament*, 657 ff., where Tristram describes his first impressions of Arthur:—

"When first
I rode from our rough Lyonnesse, and beheld
That victor of the Pagan throned in hall—
His hair, a sun that ray'd from off a brow
Like hillsnow high in heaven," etc.,

and how he and all the rest thought him more than man, and were uplifted by their worship of him to do great deeds:—

"for every knight
Believed himself a greater than himself,
And every follower eyed him as a God;
Till he, being lifted up beyond himself,
Did mightier deeds than elsewise he had done."

314. **doom**, "judgment," connected originally with "do" in the sense of "put" or "set," and meaning literally a thing set or established (Skeat, *Etym. Dict.*). Hence "doom" in the sense of "condemn," as in l. 317.

315. **hammering in his ears**, from fear that the King would condemn his dissimulation. Lancelot had the same fear of being convicted by Arthur of untruth, see *Lancelot and Elaine*, 141:—

"And with what face after my pretext made,
Shall I appear, O Queen, at Camelot, I
Before a King who honours his own word,
As if it were his God's?"

318. **all in fear** etc., *i.e.* in fear of recognition by his brothers.

321. **ranged**, "stood in order," cp. *Œnone*, 79,

"When all the full-faced presence of the Gods
Ranged in the halls of Peleus."

More usually the meaning of "range" is "set in order," ("Not less the bee would range her cells," *Two Voices*), French *ranger*, originally from the German *ring*, "circle," hence "row" or "rank." The common use in the sense of "wander abroad" seems to be derived from the idea of movement in rank or order. (Skeat, *Etym. Dict.*)

325. **to gain**, *i.e.* "to be gained." In English both the active and the passive form of gerundive are in use with little or no difference of sense: we may say "there is much to read" or "there is much to be read," "this remains to do," or "this remains to be done."

327. **boon** means (1) "prayer," as,

> "My boon I make it that you know me not."
> Shakspeare, *K. Lear*, 4, 7, 10.

(2) That which is granted in answer to prayer, or even a gift unsolicited, as in *Lancelot and Elaine*, 71:—

> "To snare her royal fancy with a boon
> Worth half her realm."

Perhaps we have here to do with two words of different origin, the first being the English word which appears as "bone" in Chaucer and "bene" in Wordsworth, and the second coming through French from the Latin *bonum* (Skeat, *Etym Dict.*)

Uther [illegible] from the dragon w[illegible] rother Aurelius [illegible] tories over the S[illegible]

330 **Yet, for the field etc** This use of "for" as equivalent to "because" is common in Tennyson, cp l. 387. So in Spenser, *Faery Queene*, 2, 3, 5:—

> "But, for in Court gay portance he perceived,
> And gallant show to be in greatest gree,
> Eftsoones to Court he cast t' advance his first degree."

333 **Whether would ye?** "which of the two do ye desire" for the use of "whether," cp "Whether of them twain did the will of his father?" Engl Bible, *Matt* 21, 31

334 **Nay,** deprecating the King's expected anger at being asked to restore the land. She does not venture to ask it in direct terms.

337 **thrice the gold,** *i e* thrice the sum offered at first by U[illegible] *for* [illegible] *ngly* [illegible] *for* [illegible] not left dependent on the length of the time

338 **no boon,** *i e* "no gift," see note on l 327

339 **so thy say be proven true,** cp l 131

340 **Accursed, who,** *i e* "accursed be the man who"

341 **shape himself a right** such a right as that suggested by King Henry IV in Shakspeare to his son

> "To thee it shall descend with better quiet
> Better opinion, better confirmation,
> For all the soil of the achievement goes
> With me into the earth" *2 Henry IV* 4, 5, 188 ff.

345. **the Barons' war,** cp l. 76

348. **I hold with those**: *i.e.* "I took part with these."

351. **seized of**, *i.e.* "possessed of." The Old French *seisir* meant to "put in possession of" or "take possession of" (originally derived from the stem of "set" or "sit"). Hence the English law term *seisin*, "possession," and to "stand seized" of a thing, meaning to "be in possession of it" (Skeat, *Etym. Dict.*): cp. Shakspeare, *Hamlet*, 1, 1, 88,—

> "all those his lands
> Which he stood seized of."

355. **wreak me**, "avenge me," cp. Germ. *rächen*. In modern English the word is hardly used except in phrases such as "to wreak one's rage" on a person, that is to allow one's anger to have free course, cp. l. 1236, "thou hast wreak'd his justice on his foes." In older English it is used generally as here with a personal object, as in Chaucer, *e.g.* "false coward wreak thy wyf": but also sometimes "to wreak a wrong," meaning to take vengeance for it. In this idyll it occurs again l. 800, "had wreak'd themselves on me," as well as in the line quoted above.

357. **I.** For the emphatic repetition, cp. l. 30.

359 **Sir Kay.** Kay, or Keux (as he is called in the French romances), was son of that Auctor or Ector (called Anton by Tennyson), who was charged by Merlin with the bringing-up of Arthur. Kay therefore was brought up as Arthur's brother, and on the request of his father he was made by Arthur seneschal of all his lands. "Artus fit Keux son sénéchal par tel convenant, que tant qu'il vivroit il seroit maître gonffanonier du royaume de Logres" (*Rom. de Merlin*, ch. 100). He appears however generally as steward of Arthur's household, "master of the meats and drinks," and so he is represented in this idyll. He showed prowess in the early wars and became a knight of the Round Table. His temper was proverbially bad, and his manners discourteous. In the *Roman de la Rose*, for example, he is given as an example of discourtesy, as Gawain of the opposite,

> "En Keux le séneschal te mire
> Qui jadis par son mokéis
> Fu mal renommés et haïs.
> Tant cum Gauvains li bien apris
> Par sa courtoisie ot le pris,
> Autretant ot de blasme Keus,
> Por ce qu'il fu fel et crueus,
> Ramponières et mal-parliers
> Desus tous autres chevaliers." 2100-2108.

His father apologises for his bad disposition by reminding Arthur that he was sent away from his mother in infancy and

given to a nurse, in order that the attention of his mother might be bestowed upon Arthur. "Si Keux est felon et denature, souffrez-en ung petit, car pour vous nourrir il est tout denature" *Rom. de Merlin*, ch. 95. Instances of his ill temper occur in connection with Percivale (in the *Roman de Lancelot*), and "La Cote male Taile," *Morte Darthur*, 9, 1. His appearance and ways are described later in this idyll, see ll. 443 ff. and 778.

259. **seneschal** means "steward," derived through French from the Old German *siniscalc*, meaning properly the oldest of the slaves or servants, cp. mareschal (marechal) from the Germ. *marah scalc*, lit. "horse servant." (Brachet, *French Etym. Dict.*)

260. **none**, i.e. "no boon."

262. **gyve**, "fetter," a Celtic word.

266. **had**, i.e. "would have," cp. l. 64

267. **Aurelius Emrys** was the brother of Uther, and reigned before him. In Latin he is called Ambrosius, and he is said to have been a son of Constantine the Armorican and his wife, "a lady descended from a noble Roman family" (Geoffrey of Monmouth, 6, 5).

370. **Return upon me**. He feels that it is in his blood, and that it is only restrained by deliberate resolve.

371. **lay him low**, i.e. let him be brought to the ground and laid in bonds as a prisoner.

373. **the justice of the King**, that is the even justice which the King administers for the whole realm, as opposed to the oppressions of the petty princes and barons who profess nevertheless to administer justice to their dependents. It was to extend this "justice of the King" over the whole realm that Arthur had striven, as in history did kings like Henry II. of England and Louis XI. of France.

374. **be he**, "if he be."

376. **Mark**. In the *Morte Darthur* he is called "a king of Cornwall," and represented as cowardly, mean and treacherous. He was uncle of Tristram and husband of Isolt of Ireland ("La beale Isoud"). He plotted constantly against Tristram, who was twice his successful rival in love, and finally killed him while harping before Isolt; and he also murdered his own brother, being jealous of his popularity.

377. **savour**. The metaphor is probably taken from the sense of smell, as in Shakespeare, *Winter's Tale*, 1. 2. 420 —

> "Turn then my freshest reputation to
> A savour that may strike the dullest nostril."

380. **charlock** is the wild mustard plant, which grows as a weed in cornfields, but is also sometimes cultivated for itself. It has pale yellow flowers.

the sudden sun, is the sun coming out suddenly from between the clouds and shining upon the field wet and glittering with the rain. The simile is one of those which seem to describe exactly a scene which the poet has seen, and which is before his mind in all its details. This kind of individuality in the scenes presented is characteristic of Tennyson: cp. the similes from *Gerant and Enid* and *The Last Tournament*, quoted in the note on l. 1392 of this idyll.

383. **Delivering that**, "delivering the message that."

vassal king, *i.e.* "dependent king," coming through French from Low Latin *uasallus*, but originally from Celtic *gwaz*, "servant." (Skeat, *Etym. Dict.*) It was the regular word for a feudal dependant.

385. **of his grace**, "by his favour"; Lat. *gratia*: cp. Shaksp. *Henry V.* 4, 7, 171,—"I would fain see it once, an please God of his grace that I might see."

386. **cousin**. Tristram was in fact his nephew, son of his sister, but "cousin" is loosely used in older English for all such relations; so Bors, who was nephew to Lancelot, is called "our Lancelot's cousin" in the *Holy Grail*.

387. **And, for himself was etc.**, cp. l. 330.

388 **liege-lord** is here equivalent to "suzerain," the co-relative of "vassal." The Old French *lige*, from Germ. *ledig*, meant originally "free": a liege-lord was a lord of a free band, and his lieges were free men, serving him and free from all other service. From this last application of the term "liege" came to mean "subject"; but here we have the more proper use of the word. (Skeat *Etym. Dict.*)

391. **fealty**, "fidelity," but especially of that which is due from vassals to their liege-lord.

392. **cried to rend**, "cried commanding his servants to rend." Compare this incident with that in the *Princess*, 1, 60:—

"He started on his feet,
Tore the King's letter, snow'd it down, and rent
The wonder of the loom thro' warp and woof
From skirt to skirt."

397. **A stately pile**: the verb is kept back by the parenthesis till l. 400. The thing spoken of is a massive projection enclosing the chimney, such as one sees sometimes in college halls of the 15th century.

398. **blazoned**, *i.e.* with arms painted upon them. In Old French *blason* means "shield," then a coat of arms painted on a

shield; and so in Old English "blazon" means "shield," and "to blazen" is to describe a shield (Skeat, *Etym. Dict.*). It is said to come from the German *blasen*, "to blow the trumpet," to proclaim a victory, but if so, how comes it that the meaning "shield" is the older one both in French and English? In Tennyson to blazon is to colour or represent in colours, several times used of stained glass windows, *e.g. The Daisy*, 58,

"The giant windows' blazoned fires":

cp *In Mem* 87, 8, and *Holy Grail*, 218

398 **blank**, "white," a term of heraldry for a shield which bears no arms the original sense is referred to in the expression "blank as death," l. 409

399. **stony**, "*made of stone*" cp *Princess, Prologue*, 102 —

"had wound
A scarf of orange round the stony helm."

401. **a knight was named**, *i e* "there was written the name of a knight."

411. **reave**, properly "strip," cp Germ. *rauben*.

415 **were any**, "if any were."

419. **churl**, from Anglo Saxon *ceorl*, "man," hence a common man as opposed to a noble. The meaning is that Mark would disgrace any station in which he was placed.

421 **hold him**, "keep him back"

422. **lap him up in cloths of lead** · *referring to the use of lead* for coffins cp *Passionate Pilgrim*, xxi. l 390,—

"All thy friends are lapp'd in lead."

"Lap" is a collateral form of "wrap"

423 **craven**, "coward" from Old French *cravanté*, "oppressed," "broken," coming from the stem of the Latin *crepare*, "to crack" (Skeat, *Etym Dict*)

424 **wayside ambushings**, such as Mark was in the habit of laying for the objects of his enmity "Ambushing," from Old French *embuscher*, Low Latin *imboscare*, fr. *boscus*, "a thicket."

425. **No fault of thine** addressing the messenger, who is to be *hospitably entertained*

427. **Accursed, who** cp l 310

429. **noise**, *i e* "report," as we have it in such expressions as "it was noised abroad" cp l 560

430. **would ride away**, to do the will of the king, and amend that which was wrong

431. Here we reach the point where Tennyson's story begins to follow that of Malory, in the 7th book of the *Morte Darthur*, see Introduction.

431. **leaning**, as if he were "weak and hungerworn." Nothing is said in Malory of the reason why he leant on the shoulders of the two others, who were "two men well beseen and richly," and before he speaks he draws himself up straight.

434. **ashamed**, because of the deception which he was practising. His untruth is a faltering one, for he makes no direct statement:—

"See ye not how weak and hungerworn
I seem—leaning on these?"

442. **thine**, *i.e.* "thy master."

444. **Wan-sallow**: both words mean "pale": "wan" is originally "colourless," especially "dark," but in modern English only "pale" (Skeat, *Etym. Dict.*). The simile refers to the leaves of a plant which is sickly because its root-sap is drawn away by parasitic lichen.

445. **lichen** is a minute kind of fungus-like vegetation which grows in barren places, on stones, and on the bark of trees.

Lo ye now! "Lo" and "look" have been confused together, though the words are not really connected; hence "lo you" is equivalent to "look you."

446 **This fellow hath broken etc.** In Malory it is, "upon pain of my life he was fostered up in some abbey, and, howsoever it was, they failed meat and drink, and so hither he is come for his sustenance." In a note on the *Vision of Piers Plowman*, Prologue, 54, where the author characterises hermits as "Grete lobyes and longe that loth were to swynke," Mr. Skeat quotes, "Ther goeth a comen proverbe: That he which hath ones ben in an abbey, wyll ever more after be slouthefull; for the which cause they ben called of many men *Abbey loutes* or *lubbers*."

447. **God wot**, *i.e.* "God knows." The verb in old English is "witen," with present tense I wot, thou wost, he wot. This form of the third person survived in the phrase "God wot," as in Shaksp. *Rich. III.* 2, 3, 18, "No, no, good friends, God wot."

brewis, "broth," from "brew," meaning "boil." The word is in Malory.

448. **However ... chance**, is the equivalent of Malory's phrase "howsoever it was," quoted above.

449. **crop** means properly the craw of a bird, here used metaphorically to enforce the comparison. A pigeon crams its crop till it forms a projecting lump.

450. In the *Morte Darthur* it is, "he shall be as fat by the twelve months' end as a pork hog."

451. **Lancelot** is the most brilliant and truly courteous of all the knights. He rather than Arthur is the hero of most of the romances of the Round Table, and Malory's *Morte Darthur* is

drawn more from the *Roman de Lancelot* than from any other source In this is contained the Quest of the Sangrail, and

452 **sleuth hound** means hound which follows the "slot" or "sleuth" (i e "track" of a deer)

gray, i e. "greyhound"

454 **Broad brows etc.**, describing him much as the horse is described in Shaksp *Venus and Adonis*, 296, "Broad breast, full eye, small head and nostril wide," etc, so as to appeal to Kay's knowledge of the points of a dog or a horse

fluent, "*flowing*" a Tennysonian variation from the common form

fine, which is the keynote of this description, being thrice repeated, means the opposite of "coarse" the word is taken up and commented upon by Kay, with sarcastic reference to Lancelot's fine manners.

455. **hands Large, fair and fine** In the *Morte Darthur* he is described as "large and long and broad in the shoulders, and well visaged, and the fairest and largest handed that ever man saw."

456 **Some mystery** Lancelot guesses that under this there lies concealed the romance of some nobly-born youth, compelled to adopt the disguise of a servant

457. **or from sheep cot etc** Lancelot means to say "whether he be noble by birth or not, he is noble by nature"

459 **shame thy judging**, i e by proving to be something more than he seems, and so shaming those who treated him ill because they thought him of mean birth

461 **poison the King's dish** The seneschal means, "Unless it be a mystery which will make him dangerous in the kitchen, it matters little to us"

463 "I dare undertake he is a villain born, and never will make man, for and he had come of gentlemen, he would have asked of you horse and armour, but such as he is, so he asketh." *Morte Darthur*, 7, 1

465 **Sir Fair hands.** In the *Morte Darthur* Kay says, "Since he hath no name, I shall give him a name that shall be Beaumains, that is Fair-hands"; and by that name he is called afterwards.

469. **sooty yoke**: the service of the kitchen in days when kitchens had no chimneys must have been certainly a sooty one.

470. "So Beaumains went to the hall-door and set him down

among boys and lads, and there he eat sadly," *Morte Darthur*, 7, 2.

472. Lancelot was ever gentle and courteous.

474. The rhythm of the line is expressive: "hustle" means originally "shake," so "push about": "to harry" is "to lay waste" as with an army (cp. Germ. *heer*), hence to "annoy," or "disturb."

476. **broach**, "spit," French *broche*, Low Latin *brocca*, "a pointed stick." It is originally the same word as "brooch." (Skeat, *Etym. Dict.*)

477. **grosser**, "coarser," *i.e.* "less refined."

478. **wrought**: from the same stem as "worked": Anglo-Saxon *weorcan*, past tense, *worhte*.

480. **graced the lowliest act**: cp. *Gardener's Daughter*, 174:—

"the glance
That graced the giving."

483. Cp. *Coming of Arthur*, 130,

"For each had warded either in the fight."

486. Arthur in *Balin and Balan*, 36, calls himself one who is rather proven in the wars than in the jousts, and Lancelot in *Lancelot and Elaine*, 311, says of him that he cares little

"For triumph in our mimic wars, the jousts—
For if his own knight cast him down, he laughs
Saying, his knights are better men than he"—

but that on the battlefield the fire of God fills him, and "there lives No greater leader."

489. **tarns**, "mountain pools."

490. **Caer-Eryri** appears to be Snowdon.

491. **the Prophet**, *i.e.* Merlin; cp. *Coming of Arthur*, 418-421, and *Passing of Arthur*, 191.

492. **the Isle Avilion**, called in the *Passing of Arthur*, 427, "the island-valley of Avilion," and in the *Morte Darthur* and elsewhere sometimes the island and sometimes the valley of Avilion, Avelon, or Avalon. It is identified with the peninsula formed by the river Brue or Brye at Glastonbury; but in Arthurian romance it is rather a kind of mythical "isle of the Blest," situated somewhere in the Ocean.

493. Arthur has the burden of this prophecy running through his mind at the last,

"Nay—God my Christ—I pass but shall not die."

494. **Gareth was glad.** Observe the repetition of the same words in the same position.

495. **rapid as any lark**: the hurrying rhythm is expressive.

496. **roundelay**, from French *rondelet*, dimin. of *rondel*, meaning a poem which contains a line which comes round again and again. (Skeat, *Etym. Dict*)

499. **life-bubbling**, *i e* bubbling with the life-blood of the dragon through whose twisted folds the knight is supposed to cut his way.

501 **gap mouth'd**, *i e.* with gaping mouths, open in wonder and fixed attention.

503 **Charm'd.** The effect of this full-sounded monosyllable with a stop after it is to make a hushed pause, which expresses the silence of the circle before it is suddenly disturbed.

504. **Blustering** is originally applied to wind "blowing loudly," and is connected with "blast"

507. **So**, "if" For the matter of these lines cp. *Morte Darthur*, 7, 2, "And where were any masteries done, thereat would he be, and there might none cast bar or stone to him by two yards"

509 "But ever when that he saw any justing of knights, that would he see and he might," *Morte Darthur*, 7, 2.

510. **So that etc**, cp 1 131

513 **spring**, "split" or "crack," which is its original sense.

519 *i e.* "at full moon," between the increasing and the decreasing moon"

521 **This, Gareth hearing** The construction of the sentence is broken off by the parenthesis, and it is resumed in a different form in l 526. cp *Passing of Arthur*, 73,

"And they my knights, who loved me once, the stroke
That strikes them dead is as my death to me"

524. **ragged**, "irregular" the first meaning of the word is "shaggy"

525. **each at either**, cp note on l. 218

526 The abrupt change of construction gives the effect of sudden emotion.

528. **Peter's knee**, because the apostle Peter is supposed to have the keys of Paradise

529 **These news** the word "news" was originally plural in English, like the French *nouvelles*, but soon became generally used as singular Shakspeare occasionally makes it plural, *e g Rom. and Jul* 3, 5, 124, "These are news indeed"

be (or *ben*) is the old southern English form of 3rd pers plural The form "are" is Northumbrian (Skeat, *Etym Dict*)

532. See 1 25. To Gawain properly belongs the epithet "strong," because of his "thrice-might," his strength increasing

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within a certain period to twice or three times what it was ordinarily.

535. **quest**, "search," as "quest of the white hart," "quest of Saugrail," hence used generally of adventures which were undertaken by knights to achieve something.

540. **yield thee thine**, *i.e.* "give thee thy due place."

541 ff. The vows are spoken of in detail by Arthur, *Guinevere*, 464-474,

"To reverence the King, as if he were
Their conscience, and their conscience as their King,
To break the heathen and uphold the Christ,
To ride abroad redressing human wrongs,
To speak no slander, no nor listen to it,
To honour his own word as if his God's,
To lead sweet lives in purest chastity,
To love one maiden only, cleave to her,
And worship her by years of noble deeds,
Until they won her."

542. **utter hardihood**, "perfect courage": "utter" or "uttermost" is that beyond which nothing can go, so "utter courtesy" in the *Marriage of Geraint*, 381: cp. l. 276 of this idyll.

543. **loving**, *i.e.* "if they love."

547. **for**, *i.e.* "as for."

make demand, *i.e.* "ask" for a report of my obedience.

548. **Of whom**, *i.e.* "of him whom," so l. 607.

549. **mellow**, properly "fully ripe" (from a stem meaning "soft"), hence metaphorically "sweet-tempered." For Kay's character see note on l. 359.

552. **Our noblest brother etc.**, cp. *Coming of Arthur*, 124,

"his warrior whom he loved
And honour'd most."

560. **noised of**, "reported of," cp. l. 429.

570. **far away**, "at a distance behind."

571. **the lions on thy shield.** The coat of arms attributed to Lancelot in the Idylls is azure lions rampant crowned with gold, cp. l. 1186 of this idyll and *Lancelot and Elaine*, 658,—

"saw
Sir Lancelot's azure lions crown'd with gold,
Ramp in the field."

In the *Lady of Shalott* however he bears a red-cross knight kneeling to a lady, and for this there is authority in the *Morte Darthur*, at least as regards one occasion.

574. **and a brow**, "and of a brow," etc.

575. May-blossom is white, and apple-blossom white tinged with red In Tennyson's *To-morrow*, 32, a rustic beauty has

"the red o' the rose an' the white o' the May,"

and in *The Brook*, 90, a maiden's blushing cheek is "fresh apple-blossom."

577 **tip tilted.** The type is the opposite to the stately aristocratic one of Maud,—

"the least little delicate aquiline curve in a sensitive nose":

here the damsel is noble by birth, as she takes care to say, and beautiful also—this too she knows a little too well ("And comely, yea, and comelier than myself")—but it is a beauty which is somewhat wanting in dignity.

579 for, "since": cp. l. 330.

581. **bandits,** "outlaws," from Ital. *banditi* "proclaimed," cp. English and German "ban."

[illegible]

584. **the lowest hold,** i e the most remote and isolated castle.

586 **that best blood,** the wine used in the sacrament of the *altar*

587 **I nor mine,** "neither I nor mine"

597 **in three loops,** that is, a river has to be crossed three times to reach it we must conceive that the pathless forest would make it nearly impossible to go by any other way

603. **purport,** i e "purpose," as in the *Princess*, 3, 196,

"if your Highness keep
Your purport"

604 **do the battle,** i e fight the contest which shall decide his claim; so also in l. 1262

607. **or a holy life,** i e what is called the religious life, under convent rule The admission *to convents takes place with forms* which resemble those of marriage.

616 **from the moment,** *i e.* as the momentary occasion prompts.

624 **mounted,** "surmounted" In Spenser, *Faery Queene*, 2, 11, 22, it is said of Maleger,

"Upon his head he wore an helmet light,
Made of a dead man's skull, that seemed a ghastly sight"

634. **yea, King, thou knowest etc** He is moved to "bawl

himself a kitchen-knave," by Kay's horror at hearing him ask for the quest: he emphasises that which scandalises the rest.

636. Observe the imitative rhythm.

638. **Brought down** etc., *i.e.* "lowered his brow for a moment."

638, 9. **Rough ... pardonable.** The king means that the impulse which makes the speech rough and abrupt makes it also pardonable.

642. **Slew the May-white,** *i.e.* caused the white (of her forehead) to be suffused with red.

646. **lane of access,** the passage through the crowd which gave approach to the King: "lane" means originally "narrow passage."

648. **the weird white gate,** see l. 209 ff.

649. **The field of tourney**: the place mentioned in *Lancelot and Elaine* as

"the lists
By Camelot in the meadow."

651. **gave,** *i.e.* "gave entrance," like the French *donner;* cp. *Princess,* 1, 226,

"into rooms which gave
Upon a pillar'd porch."

range means properly "row," hence "ordered extent."

655. **blowing trees,** *i.e.* trees with their spring bloom, the scene being described as it would be at the season to which this idyll belongs.

657. **counter,** "opposite."

658. **High that,** "so high that."

665. **This ... that,** "the one ... the other."

a maiden shield is a shield with no arms upon it, such as a knight would bear who had done as yet no deed of arms. So a "maiden sword" is a sword with which as yet no deeds of arms have been done, as in Shaksp. *1 Henry IV.* 5, 4, 134,—

"full bravely hast thou fleshed
Thy maiden sword."

Cp. also the expression "maiden speech," meaning a speech from one who has not displayed any oratory before (at least in the assembly where it is delivered).

casque, "helmet," comes through French from the Italian *casco,* connected with words which mean "shell" or "husk." In Spanish *casco* means "skull," "sherd," "cask," "helmet," and *cascara* means "rind." (Skeat, *Etym. Dict.*)

667. **dropt,** "hung."

669. **like a fuel-smothered fire,** cp. l. 535, "I spring Like

flame from ashes": but the two ideas are not precisely the same. Here more attention is called to the concealment of the living fire by material obstruction.

670. brake bright, in the arms which had come to him on that day.

as those Dull-coated things etc.: the reference is to insects with dark wing-cases, which are opened before they fly, and disclose lustrous metallic hues below. Many of the tropical species of *coleoptera* are extraordinarily brilliant in body colouring, but the reference may well be to some English kinds of beetle. Observe the exactness of the simile, the flash of brightness being just before the insect takes flight.

673. A jewell'd harness. We are reminded of the description of the dragon-fly in the *Two Voices*, 13:—

"An inner impulse rent the veil
Of his old husk: from head to tail
Came out clear plates of sapphire mail,"

but there it is a coming forth from the chrysalis, not an opening of wing-covers which is described.

The connection of the clauses here is grammatically irregular, but the sense is plain.

675. donn'd. To "don" is "do on," as "doff" is "do off," "do" originally meaning "put": cp. note on l. 314.

677. Storm-strengthen'd: a tree growing on an exposed place forms wood of tougher grain from battling with the wind.

678. trenchant, properly "cutting," from Old French *trencher*. "trenchant blade" is a common description of a sword in Spenser.

680. who, i.e. "him who," so next line and ll. 545 and 607.

in throng, "in a crowd"; "throng" is from words meaning "to press", cp. Germ. *drängen*, *drang*, etc.

681. Lustier, "more lustily," i.e. "more vigorously"; see note on l. 1251.

could but, "could only," in the same sense as "could not but"; cp. "but" for "only" in l. 104.

684. lanes of shouting. The shouting throng line his path on both sides, and he rides through the space between them: cp. the expression "lane of access" in l. 646.

687. ere his cause Be cool'd etc., "before he has given his impulse full way, and satisfied by indulging it."

being named, "when he is called."

693. the King hath past his time etc., "the King is no longer what he was in former times; though yet in the prime of his age, his wits begin to wander."

695. **mine**, "my fire of wrath."

696. "Has the whole order of things been reversed?"

697. **Begone!** addressed to the thralls.

699. **his wits**, *i.e.* the King's.

700. **villain**, see note on l. 157, where, however, the word is an adjective.

703. **peacock'd up**, "made conceited."

705. **yet**, "still."

706, 7. **Out of the smoke ... mire**, an allusion to the proverb, "out of the smoke into the smother"; cp. Shaksp. *As You Like It*, 1, 2, 290:—

> "Thus must I from the smoke into the smother;
> From tyrant duke unto a tyrant brother."

so my lance Hold, "if my lance do not fail."

711. **that**, *i.e.* go against the King.

712. **in thee**, "in thy person." The King had set him to obey Kay, and therefore obedience to Kay had been for him obedience to the King.

714. **knowing ... of**, "skilful in (the use of)."

717. **silent faces.** A contrast to the "lanes of shouting" through which Gareth had ridden down the same slope street and out of the gate, ll. 684, 5.

721. **lackt**: so used in Shaksp. *Much Ado*, 4, 1, 221:—

> "being lacked and lost,
> Why then we rack the value,"

and *Coriol.* 4, 1, 15:—

> "I shall be loved when I am lack'd."

726. In the *Morte Darthur* it is, "So when he was armed ther was none but few so goodly a man as he was."

729. **foul-flesh'd**, because the inside of a fungus often has fleshy appearance.

agaric is the scientific name of the genus of fungi to whi mushrooms belong. Some species are extremely offensive smell.

holt, "wood," cp. German *holz*.

730. **And deems it carrion.** Observe the exactness of simile. The offensiveness of the smell is in great measure der from the idea that it comes from some putrefying body, fo impressions of the sense of smell are perhaps especially liab be influenced by the imagination: so the disgust of Lynette i only because of her champion's former employment, but also much more, because that employment seems to imply mean l

730. carrion means "carcase," Old French *caroigne*, from Latin *caro*; cp Chaucer, *Knightes Tale*, 1155,

"The caroigne in the bussh with throte y-corve."

731 or or, "either or"

[illegible]

nipt her slender nose Lynette and her actions are described throughout in terms which makes us feel that there is but little dignity in her aristocratic exclusiveness

732. petulant means properly "forward," "ready to attack" (Lat *petere*), hence used of impatient vexation

shrilling. a favourite word with Tennyson (as with Spenser), cp. *Lancelot and Elaine*, 1019,—

"the blood red light of dawn
Flared on her face, she shrilling, 'Let me die.'"

736 We lack thee by the hearth, notice the sarcasm here.

738 "Yea, said Beaumains, I know you for an ungentle knight of the court" *Morte Darthur*, 7, 4

739 Have at thee, means "have a care of thyself," an intimation of instant attack "Have at thee, coward," says Tybalt to Benvolio in Shakspeare

shock'd, a word often used by Tennyson of coming together in fight, e g *Lancelot and Elaine*, 456,

"Meet in the midst and there so furiously
Shock, that a man far off" etc,

"*Love thou thy land*," 77,

"If New and Old, disastrous feud,
Must ever shock like armed foes"

Cp ll 88 and 939 of this idyll

740 shoulder slipt, i e with dislocated shoulder, cp "shoulder-shotten" in Shaksp *Taming of the Shrew*, 3, 2, 56

742 shingle, "gravel," from a Norwegian word meaning to "ring" or "tinkle"

743 beat of his heart.

746 ff "What doest thou here? thou stinkest all of the kitchen, thy clothes be foul of the grease and tallow that thou gainedst in King Arthur's kitchen, weenest thou, said she, that I allow thee for yonder knight that thou killedst? Nay truly,

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or thou slewest him unhappily and cowardly, therefore turn gain, foul kitchen page. I know thee well, for Sir Kay named thee Beaumains; what art thou but a lubber and a turner of spits, and a ladle-washer? Damsel, said Beaumains, say to me what ye will, I will not go from you whatsoever you say, for I have undertaken to King Arthur for to achieve your adventure, and so shall I finish it to the end, or I shall die therefore. Fie on thee, kitchen knave, wilt thou finish my adventure? thou shalt anon be met withal, that thou wouldest not for all the broth that ever thou suppedst once look him in the face. I shall assay, said Beaumains." *Morte Darthur*, 7, 5. Observe how closely the original story is here followed.

746. **in my fellowship**, "in my company"; cp. *Lancelot and Elaine*, 222:—

"'So ye will grace me,' answer'd Lancelot,
Smiling a moment, 'with your fellowship.'"

749. **unhappiness**, "accident," "mishap." The word used here in the *Morte Darthur* is the adverb "unhappily," but elsewhere we have "unhappiness," *e.g.* 7, 8.

751. **loon**, "base fellow," put for "lowm," whence in Old English we have "lowmyshe," "dull": cp. Germ. *lümmel*. (Skeat, *Etym. Dict.*)

766. **beknaved**, "called knave." The use of the prefix may be illustrated by a sentence quoted in Murray's *English Dictionary* from Fielding's *Jonathan Wild*:—"She beknaved, berascalled, and berogued the unhappy hero." The prefix has not always a depreciatory sense, *e.g.* Jonson, *Bartholomew-Fair*, 5, 3:—"They do so all-to-bemadam me, I think they think me a very lady."

771. **spit**, contemptuously for sword, as in l. 819; cp. "toasting iron," Shaksp. *King John*, 4, 3, 99; but here there is of course a definite allusion to Gareth's employment in the kitchen.

773. **evensong** is properly the evening service of the church, called vespers, cp. l. 46; hence the time of that service, *i.e.* about sunset.

777. **gloomy-gladed**: *i.e.* with dark spaces opening in th forest: a glade is properly a clear space upon which the ligh shines, having the same stem as "glad" and Germ. *glatt*, an meaning originally "bright." (Skeat, *Etym. Dict.*)

778. **mere**, "pool": properly "dead, stagnant water," cogna with Latin *mare*.

779. **as the red eye**: the simile expresses the colour of the m with sunset upon it, as well as its shape. Eagle-owl is t name given to various large species of the owl family which found in Europe, Asia and America, but only occasionally Britain.

781. "So thus as they rode in the wood, there came a man flying all that ever he might. Whither wilt thou, said Beaumains. O lord, he said, help me, for hereby in a slade are six thieves, that have taken my lord and bound him, so I am afeard lest they will slay him." *Morte Darthur*, 7, 5

784 Bound. He takes up the word used by the other: cp. ll. 42, 140 and 983.

785. straitlier, "more closely"

792. a stone etc, "with a stone about his neck."

793 quieted, a euphemism for "killed." Malory says, "He rode unto them and struck one unto the death and then another, and at the third stroke he slew the third thief: and then the other three fled"

796 Imitative rhythm the dactylic measure followed by a pause, with which the verse begins, expresses the rolling in of the stone; "oilily bubbled up" gives the effect first of smoothness and then of disturbance.

799 caitiff, originally "captive," (so in Chaucer, *Knightes Tale*, 66, "Now be we caytifs,") hence "worthless," "bad"; cp the Italian *cattivo*, which means both "captive" and "bad," and the English "villain," see note on l. 157.

800 wreak'd themselves cp l 385

802 my thief, i e "the thief that I mean to punish"; cp the directions for cooking a hare, beginning, "First catch your hare"

vermin are properly creeping things like worms, hence obnoxious insects, and then obnoxious animals of any small species, as rats, weasels, foxes, etc; it is often collective in its meaning, as in the *Marriage of Geraint*, 217 —

"And I will track this vermin to their earths."

804 wan water "wan" is a habitual epithet of water in [illegible]

805 let go, "slip off"

806 The phenomenon of *ignis fatuus*, a bluish-coloured flame flickering over the surface of stagnant water, has given rise to many superstitions, and is perhaps not even yet scientifically explained

grimly: "grim" means "fierce," cp German *grimm* and *gram*; but here "grimly" seems to mean much the same as "gruesome" or "grisly," i.e "horrible"

809. **fain**, "gladly"; also as an adjective, *e.g. Princess*, 6, 182,

"and yet how fain was I
To dream thy cause embraced in mine."

worshipfully, "honourably," the word used in the *Morte Darthur*, where "to win worship" is a common expression.

810. **guerdon** comes through French from Low Latin *widerdonum*, a half translation of the Old German *widarlôn* "gift in return." (Skeat, *Etym. Dict.*)

811. **for the deed's sake**, repeating Arthur's words in l. 559.

813. **harbourage**, "lodging": the word "harbour" means originally "shelter for an army," from the stems of the Modern German words *heer* and *bergen*. In Old German *hereberga* means "camp," whence the French *auberge*. (Skeat, *Etym. Dict.*)

815. **Arthur's Table**, *i.e.* the "Table Round," the celebrated Order of Knighthood founded by Arthur. According to the *Roman de Merlin*, followed by Malory, the table had places for a hundred and fifty knights, and at Whitsuntide each year the number was filled up, except two places, which were left void. Other legends say that the Round Table was made after the model of that used by Christ for the Last Supper, and had thirteen seats, of which one was left vacant.

817. **in a sort**, "in a certain sense."

820. **rout**, properly a "broken mass" of troops, hence "a confused body." The Low Latin *rupta*, from which comes the French *route*, means first "a mass of broken troops," "a defeat," (2) "a part" of an army, (3) "a way broken" through a forest. Hence the various meanings of the words "rout," "route," and "rut." (Skeat, *Etym. Dict.*)

craven, cp. l. 423.

821. **had**, "would have," cp. l. 64.

825. **manor**, coming through French from Latin *manere* (cp. "mansion"), means properly "residence." Later it was applied to the estate over which a nobleman had jurisdiction.

827. **viand**, French *viande*, Lat. *uiuenda* (neut. plur.) "provisions," from *uiuere* "to live."

828. **cate**, generally in the plural, "cates," meaning "provisions," connected with "cater," meaning "provide," coming through French (*acat*, *achat*) from Low Latin *accaptare* "to purchase." (Skeat, *Etym. Dict.*) Sometimes it means "dainties" as distinguished from ordinary provisions, but this is not its original sense, cp. Shaksp. *Comedy of Errors*, 3, 1, 28:—

"But though my cates be mean, take them in good part."

829. in his pride, i e. decked with his gay plumage, as was the custom in serving such birds at banquete

[illegible]

"And carf byforn his fader at the table.")

832. Meseems, cp note on l 92

839 frontless, "shameless," cp the French *effronté*.

844 to stick, i e "kill," by sticking a knife into the throat

847. "Then the knight was ashamed at her words, and took him up and set him at a side board, and set himself afore him" *Morte Darthur*, 7, 5

859 See note on l 241.

[illegible]

etc"

867. convey'd, in the original sense of the word (like "convoyed"), "accompanied," French *convoier*, Low Latin *conviare*, from *via*, "way" "Convey them with safe conduct," says Henry V. in Shakspeare of the French ambassadors (*Henry V* 1, 2, 296)

871 isled together, "taken refuge in the same island," or rather on the same rising ground left as an island in the flood

[illegible]

873 ruth, "pity" a favourite word with Spenser, it is used more than once in *Geraint and Enid*, e g 101, 203, 250.

882 hers who lay Among the ashes, alluding to the popular tale of Cinderella

886 Full, narrow the punctuation requires that these words should be taken separately as adjectives with a pause between them For the meaning of the symbolism, refer to the Introduction

arc for "arch," as less commonplace.

886. **took at a leap,** *i.e.* crossed without any resting-place in mid-stream. To "take" a fence or a brook is to jump over it, a term used of horses in hunting.

888. **pavilion,** French *pavillon,* Lat. *papilionem* (acc. of *papilio*), which means "butterfly," hence "tent," because spread out like the wings of a butterfly. (Skeat. *Etym. Dict.*)

889. **Lent-lily in hue.** The Lent-lily is the yellow daffodil: "Lent" originally means simply "spring," cp. German *Lenz.* The colours mentioned, gold, purple and crimson are those of sunrise.

891. Observe the fluttering in the rhythm.

901. In *Morte Darthur,* 7, 8, the green knight by blowing a horn summons two damsels to arm him.

908. **the stone Avanturine** is a kind of quartz which from its containing mica reflects light in a number of gem-like sparkles.

913. **Glorying,** *i.e.* boastfully displaying himself. The pause here gives singular emphasis to the word and affords time for the elaborately drawn picture to impress itself on the imagination. This is further ensured by the recapitulation of its points in describing the reflection in the stream.

921. "Damsel, he said, ye are to blame so to rebuke me, for I had lever do five battles than so to be rebuked." *Morte Darthur,* 7, 11.

922. **Far liefer had I** etc., cp. *Marriage of Geraint,* 93,—

"Far liefer had I gird his armour on him."

The expression "I had as lief" is common both in modern and older English, as *e.g.* in Shaksp. *Twelfth Night,* 3, 2, 33:—

"I had as lief be a Brownist as a politician,"

and *Taming of the Shrew,* 1, 1, 135,—"I had as lief take her dowry with this condition, to be whipped at the high cross every morning." It seems to mean, "I should hold it equally dear to" etc. So here in the comparative it would mean "Far dearer should I hold it to fight" etc. For the meaning of "lief" cp. *Passing of Arthur,* 248, "As thou art lief and dear."

924. "The more ye said, the more ye angered me, and my wrath I wreaked upon them that I had ado withal. And therefore all the missaying that ye missayed me furthered me in my battle," etc. *Morte Darthur,* 7, 11 (but the order of events and sayings is not quite the same as in Tennyson: see Introduction).

934. **lightly,** "quickly": cp. "lightly they avoided thei horses." *Morte Darthur,* 7, 12.

935. **Avoid** means originally "make empty," as in the passag quoted above, hence "depart" (*i.e.* "avoid thy place"), *e.g* "their pages avoided," in the *Morte Darthur;* and so in Shak

peare we have "avoid the house," "avoid my sight," and often simply "avoid," as here.

939 **Shock'd**, cp l. 739, and note

the central bridge, *i e* "the centre of the bridge," a Latinism.

943 *drew his sword* the usual practice in knightly combat was to charge with the lance on horseback till one or both should be dismounted or disarmed, and then fight with swords on foot: sometimes when the lance was broken they fought with their swords on horseback

944 "they lashed at each other with their swords" is a common expression in the *Morte Darthur* For **brand** see note on l. 66.

from the adjective gruf which occurs in Chaucer, *e g*

"And gruf he fil al plat upon the grounde." *Prioresses Tale*, 174

It means properly "face downwards," as we see in the Scandinavian languages from which it comes, hence "flat on the ground" The verb "grovel" is formed from the adverb "groveling" (Skeat, *Etym Dict*)

956 **hardy**, "bold," as "hardihood" in l 542.

pleasure,
else not.
thee quit
h, I will

969. Cp *Morte Darthur*, 7, 7 —"Away kitchen knave, out of the wind, for the smell of thy foul clothes grieveth me"

970 **she sang** The songs of Lynette are of course introduced by Tennyson, and mark a growth of sentiment of which there

is no trace in the original story. The two first are accompanied by abuse of her companion, but nevertheless they are half addressed to him, by virtue of the parenthetical additions; and all are unintelligible unless they are meant to express (though sometimes under cover of aristocratic scorn) emotions inspired by the champion's success, as well as by the influences of external nature.

971. **felon** means originally (in French and Low Latin) "traitor" or "rebel," hence "wicked person."

972. **thou**, addressing Gareth.

unhappiness, "accident"; cp. l. 749.

979. **their fool's parable**: for the allegory is represented as one deliberately invented by the personages of it, see l. 1179.

980. **Will pay thee**, *i.e.* "who will pay thee"; cp. ll. 1011, 1154. The metaphor of "wages" refers again to Gareth's menial condition.

to boot, "with advantage," *i.e.* all that is due and more: "boot" is from the same stem as "better"; cp. "bootless," meaning "without profit."

983. **Parables? Hear a parable etc.** He takes up the word used casually by the other, and turns it to his purpose, as so often in Tennyson, cp. ll. 42, 140, and 781 of this idyll.

985. **the hearth**, *i.e.* those who served about the hearth.

co-mates, "comrades." There is some redundancy in the word, for "mate" by itself means "comrade"; it is as old as Shakspeare however, "Now my co-mates and brothers in exile."

987. **and there ... with it**, *i.e.* no one dared to meddle with it.

988. **And such a coat art thou.** The absence of poetical sentiment in this parable makes an intentional contrast to the damsel's lyric emotion.

990. **worry** originally means "strangle" (cp. German, *würgen*), and is still used especially of the killing of sheep by wolves or dogs; hence in general of a dog fighting with another animal or a man.

993. **Ay, Sir Knave!** an exclamation of surprise at the boldness of his tone.

996. **worship**, "honour": cp. l. 809.

1001. **to blinding**, *i.e.* so as to dazzle the eyes that looked.

the Noonday Sun, *i.e.* he who called himself so.

1002. **the flower etc.** This is the yellow dandelion or some similar flower, of which the seeds are winged, somewhat like

tiny arrows, and loosely inserted on a large round receptacle. The feathered seeds form a globe which might be imagined to be made up of a number of fairy arrows. The flower is said to "blow a globe of after arrowlets," meaning that it blooms into a globe of arrowlets, which come after the yellow petals are fallen. (Notice that "blows" is intransitive and means the same as "blooms," as in l. 1042.) In *Aylmer's Field*, 93, allusion is made to the child's game of blowing them away, and they are compared, as here, to arrows:—

> "Or from the tiny pitted target blew
> What looked a flight of fairy arrows aim'd
> All at one mark, all hitting."

The shield is like a gigantic dandelion flower, being golden-yellow and round.

1005. **and Gareth's eyes had flying blots** etc., *i.e.* he was dazzled and could not see other things clearly.

1008. **marches**, "borders," from the same stem as "mark." He takes Gareth for his brother the Morning-Star because he has his shield: cp. l. 1071.

shrill'd, cp. l. 732.

1009. **athwart**, "across."

1012. **vizoring up**, "covering up with the vizor": the "vizor," French *visere* from *vis* "face," is the part of the helmet which covers the face and can be raised and lowered at pleasure.

1013. **cipher face**, means face of round nothingness, "rounded foolishness," as the words that follow explain. The word "cipher" is properly equivalent to zero, the symbol of nothing, a round O. The word is from Old French *cyfre*, Low Latin *cifra*, Arab. *sifr*. (Brachet, *Etym. French Dict.*)

1014. **push'd horse**, "spurred his horse on."

1020. The rhythm is expressive, first hurried, then pausing, then *after a space pausing again*, and resuming its steady flow in the next line, as the stream bears away the fallen horse and his rider. Something of the same effect recurs in l. 1031.

1028. **the good wind**, alluding to what was said in l. 969.

1029. **not a point**. The compass, or circle by which the direction of winds is reckoned, is divided into thirty two "points."

1037. **What knowest thou** etc. The song is interrupted by comments addressed to Gareth, and indicating the distance between them, lest he should imagine that *he* could be in any way referred to in the song.

1012. **Blow**, "bloom" (cp. Germ. *blühen*), allied to the Latin *florere*.

1014. **garnish** originally means "defend" (cp. French *garnir* and *garnison*), hence "surround" by way of decoration.

1045. **the flower of kitchendom**: as we might say "the flower of knighthood," that is, the best of all knights, so "the flower of kitchendom" means the best of all kitchen-knaves.

kitchendom, formed after the model of "Christendom," "heathendom," in a collective sense, meaning the whole body of people employed in kitchens.

1048. **Rosemary stuck** in the nose, mouth and ears is the traditional decoration of the boar's head when served up at table; cp. the old carol sung at Queen's College, Oxford,

"The bore's head in hande bring I,
With garlandes gay and rosemary,"

and a curious description by Dekker of persons apprehensive of catching the plague (in 1603): "they went about miching and muffled up and down, with rue and wormwood stuft into their eares and nosthrils, looking like so many bores heads stuck with branches of rosemary, to be served in for brawne at Christmas."

It was sometimes also garnished with bay-leaves, as *e.g.* at Hornchurch, Essex, where a boar's head is (or was) annually wrestled for at Christmas: see Hone's *Every Day Book*, i. 1619 and ii. 1649.

1052. **mavis, merle**, "thrush, blackbird"; "mavis" comes through French from a Celtic word, and "merle" from the Latin *merula*.

1057. **Larding and basting**: "to lard" would be to smear with grease before cooking, and "to baste" is to pour the melted fat over the meat while cooking.

1058. **Larded thy last**, "done thy larding for the last time."

1060. **of treble bow**, "of three arches."

1063. **deep-dimpled**, referring to the depressions formed by eddies in the broad stream: "dimple" means properly a small hollow.

1067. **harden'd skins** would be untanned hide which had hardened upon his body and taken its form.

1068. **so ye cleave**. The use of "so" in all the senses of "if," *e.g.* as equivalent to "even if" or "supposing that," is charac-

teristic of Tennyson; cp. ll. 293, 441. Ordinarily it means "if only."

1071. brother-star, because Gareth bears the shield of the "Morning-Star."

1072. ward, "place of guard."

1075 disaster. She plays upon the word "star," and says that this is for him a star of evil fortune importing his destruction. The word "disaster," French *désastre*, is derived originally from Latin *astrum* "star" with prefix *dis* in a bad sense, meaning "evil star" and so (from the belief in the influence of the stars) "evil fortune."

1085. russet, "reddish-brown," from French *rousset*, Lat. *russus*.

1086. grizzled, "gray haired," from French *gris*.

1088. dying evergreen, symbolical of the dying away of all the fresh impulses of youth.

1092 ff With the description of this fight compare that of the fight between Prince Arthur and Maleger in Spenser, *Faery Queene*, 2, 11, 20-46 —

> "As pale and wan as ashes was his look:
> His body lean and meagre as a rake,
> And skin all wither'd like a dried rook."

The resemblances in the incidents of the fight are the repeated overthrow of the enemy followed by his instant upspringing again, [illegible] life."

hurl'd together, "dashed against each other" The original meaning of "hurl" (or "hurtle") is "to dash repeatedly against," a frequentative from "hurt," cp. the French *heurter*. The expression "they hurtled together" is common in the *Morte Darthur*, e.g 7, 12.

1093 lighted from his horse. The idea is of lightening the horse of his burden, and hence comes the general use of the word in the sense of "descend."

drew his sword.

1094 him drawn, "him with his sword drawn" "to be drawn" is a common expression in older English for to have one's sword drawn, e.g Shaksp *Rom. and Jul.* 1, 1, 77,—

"What, drawn, and talk of peace!"

1099. **Foredooming**, "having a presage that": cp. Spenser, *Faery Queene*, 2, 11, 44,

"Nigh his wits' end then wox the amazed Knight,
And thought his labour lost, and travail vain."

1100. **for he seemed as one etc.** With this reference to the difficulty of late repentance compare *Geraint and Enid*, 901 ff:—

"Full seldom doth a man repent, or use
Both grace and will to pluck the vicious quitch
Of blood and custom wholly out of him,
And make all clean, planting himself afresh."

1107. The dactylic rhythm of these lines seems meant to express the eagerness of her clamour.

1109. **I have prophesied**: see l. 1087, "and so wilt thou, Sir Star."

1112. **the wind ... again**, referring to ll. 969, 1028.

1117. **Southwesterns**, *i.e.* "Southwest winds," these being in the British Isles the most stormy and violent winds, coming across the open Atlantic.

rolling ridge on ridge: "ridge" is a favourite word with Tennyson, and is several times applied to waves of the sea, *e.g. Enoch Arden*, 525,

"The Biscay, roughly ridging eastward,"

(under the influence of one of these same Southwesterns), *Sea Dreams*, 204,

"a ridge Of breaker issued from the belt,"

and *Locksley Hall*, 6,

"And the hollow ocean-ridges roaring into cataracts."

1118. **The buoy that rides**, *i.e.* "can bring under the buoy that rides." The buoy dips in the trough, and then when it seems likely to be overwhelmed by the next wave, springs up and rides on its summit: "ride" is a word which is applied to ships at anchor rising and falling with the waves, hence "road" is a place where ships can lie at anchor in the open sea.

1122. **wiry** means "strong and pliant"; "wire" means originally "twist," hence of metal drawn out or twisted together.

1126. **sink or swim**, *i.e.* to sink or swim as chance might decide.

1130. **trefoil**, the three-leaved clover: the three colours of the rainbow are of course the primary colours of which its hues are composed.

This time the song seems to be of brightness after gloom, as if referring to the final clearing away of the clouds from her companion's achievements.

1133 fain had, *i e.* "gladly would have": cp. I 809

1137 ff "Marvel have I, said the damsel, what manner a man ye be, for it may never be otherwise but that ye be come of a noble blood, for so foul and shamefully did never woman rule a knight as I have done you, and ever courteously ye have suffered me, and that came never but of a gentle blood" *Morte Darthur*, 7, 11

1143 mistrusted, *i.e* "suspected" ("thought distrustfully"), cp Shaksp *Winter's Tale*, 2, 1, 48 —

"All's true that is mistrusted"

1144 Would handle scorn, "would make use of so unworthy a weapon as scorn" cp *Guinevere*, 30 —

"in those days
No knight of Arthur's noblest dealt in scorn."

1145 cope, properly "vie with," hence "match," "deal with" [illegible]

1146 ff. "Damsel, said Beaumains, a knight may little do that may not suffer a damsel" *Morte Darthur*, 7, 11

1150 waywardness. "wayward" is for "awayward," *i e* going in a direction away from something, hence perverse and wilful.

[illegible]

to shew and prove myself at the end [illegible] *Darthur*, 7, 11. Cp L 923

1154. quell, "subdue," originally "kill"

1153 The lone hern The heron, which is gregarious in [illegible]

to nature

1160. **baken.** This is the older form; so in *Piers the Plowman*, 6, 295,

"Benes and baken apples thei broughte in her lappes";

also in Chaucer.

1163. **comb,** "hollow in a hill side," a Celtic word occurring frequently in local names of Wales and the West of England, as Ilfracombe, Melcombe etc. In the neighbourhood referred to in l. 1182 there is Combe Crag.

1165. **slowly-waning,** like "slowly-fading" in the *Coming of Arthur*; here used of the colours fading away under the influence of time.

1168. **The war of Time against the soul of man.** This line sums up the drift of the allegory contained in this idyll: see Introduction.

1170. **taken but the form,** *i.e.* called themselves by the names, but without any perception of the real significance of the allegory.

1172. **In letters like etc.** The Gelt is a small stream in Cumberland running into the Irthing just before the latter joins the Eden. The Roman Wall is not far off, and there are Roman quarries with inscriptions near the Irthing and the Gelt. That which is referred to here seems to be the following, cut on a lime-stone rock:—

VEX. LLEG II. AVG. ON. AP. APRO E. MAXIMO CONSVLIBVS SVB. AGRICOLA OP. OFICINA MERCATI.

The first words evidently are *Vexillatio legionis ii Augustae*, and we gather that a detachment of the second legion was stationed there for some purpose in the year 207 A.D. *Vexillarii* are simply troops detached from the legion and serving under a separate standard (*vexillum*). The letters of the inscription are plain Roman capitals rudely carved.

This comparison is an example of Tennyson's characteristic of referring for similitudes to his own individual experience on some special occasion, rather than to things of general knowledge. To understand the similes fully we must have had experience of precisely the same circumstances, or be acquainted with the actual place which suggested the comparison: cp. note on l. 380. Here the place referred to is so obscure, that exact local knowledge of a particular part of Cumberland is necessary to trace the reference. The river Gelt is not to be found in any of the ordinary Gazetteers or Atlas-indexes.

1174. **Phosphorus,** "Morning-Star," **Meridies,** "Mid-day," **Hesperus,** "Evening-Star," **Nox,** "Night," **Mors,** "Death." The names are symbols of the periods of man's life.

1177. **running down,** *i.e.* "closely pursuing."

1184 **headlong error**, that is the deviation caused by her precipitate course. This line is explanatory of the previous one.

1185 **having swum the river-loops**, that is, he has not come

1186 **blue shield lions**, see l. 571 and note

1189 He supposes that this is the knight of the Morning-Star, and that he has overcome Gareth.

1190 **prick'd**, i.e. "spurr'd."

1195. **jarr'd upon Lynette** "to jar" is originally "to make a harsh noise," hence "to sound unpleasing" as here.

1198. **blew your boast** the expression is from the *Morte Darthur* in another part of the story. "Fie, fie, said the damsel, that ever such a dirty knave should blow such a boast"

1203 f. He quotes the words which were used by Lynette herself to account for his victories, ll 748, 972, 1033.

1209 **As on the day etc.** See the description of Pelleas on the day when he was knighted —

> "And as he came away
> The men who met him rounded on their heels
> And wonder'd after him, because his face
> Shone like the countenance of a priest of old
> Against the flame about a sacrifice
> Kindled by fire from heaven so glad was he."
> *Pelleas and Ettarre*, 134

1211. **to mar the boast etc.** It is natural to feel that boasting will be followed by misfortune Lancelot's kinsmen (brethren, cousins, nephews) were proud of him, and held close to him always; see especially *Morte Darthur*, 7, 28; 11, 9 ff, 20, 5 ff. The chief of them were Ector de Maris, Bors, Lionel, Bleoberis and Galihodin.

1213. **Had sent thee down etc.** He means, if he, by a chance which could hardly be, had unhorsed Lancelot, who had been ever courteous to him in the days of his vassalage, he would have been shamed and sad

1218 **still**, "continually," the original meaning so in the *Lady of Shalott*, 64,

> "But in her web she still delights
> To weave the mirror's magic sights."

and elsewhere, "the still recurring gnat."

1221. **play'd upon**: see note on l. 248.

1230. **Victor from vanquished issues**, *i.e.* we learn to conquer by being conquered.

1232. **thy good horse** etc., addressing Gareth again.

1236. **wreak'd his justice**, cp. note on l. 355. The meaning here seems akin to that of the phrase "to wreak wrath." The justice of the king may be said to be avenged (or wreaked) on his foes, when that punishment is inflicted upon them which justice would demand.

1242. **for worse** etc. Her impatient exclamation means, "Well, well, being so, the case is no better, nay even worse; for worse than being fooled by others it is to fool oneself, and this it seems I have done."

1246. **But ... honeysuckle**, so that it is concealed, and we must seek before we can find it. Or possibly, the idea of a cave having suggested concealment, she means, "but we may easily recognise it by the honeysuckle which grows over it outside." The appropriateness of the word "flies" will be seen by anyone who observes how the honeysuckle grows, with long sprays waving in the wind, while its main stem twines round some support.

1251. **lusty**, "vigorous"; the original meaning is "pleasant," and so it is used by Chaucer, *e.g.* "Full lusty was the weder and benigne"; then just as "lustless" (listless) came to mean "feeble," so "lusty" got the sense of "strong," "vigorous."

1253. **rated at**, "scolded at": the word is generally used with a direct object, as in *Aylmer's Field*,—

"they must have rated her
Beyond all tolerance."

1254. **vext his day**, *i.e.* "harassed him all through the day" with fault-finding.

1255. **Good lord**, addressing Lancelot.

how sweetly etc. Another good observer has described the same: "the honeysuckle twining round the porch exhaled its perfume in a twofold degree, as though it had lost its coyness at that silent time and loved to shed its fragrance on the night." Dickens, *Barnaby Rudge*, ch. 54.

1259. **Full merry am I.** Her aristocratic prejudices are unconquerable: she had begun to glory in her knave, and she even felt vexation at first that the wonder should be removed and he should prove a knight; but after all she would not have been quite happy if he had not been "noble."

1265. **Miss the full flower** etc., *i.e.* fail to achieve the final victory which is, as it were, the full flower of his accomplished quest.

1273. **Ramp** means properly "climb" (French *ramper*, Ital. *rampicare*), hence "rampant" in heraldry means "in a climbing position," standing on the hind legs.

1274. **on whom all spears etc**, meaning that all spears break upon this shield

1277. **from my hold on these**: valour streams, as it were, from the lions of the shield through him who holds it.

1279 **even the shadow**, i e the counterfeit presentment which he is about to make of Lancelot, by bearing his shield

1281. **Arthur's harp** It is said that some Welsh poets give this name to the constellation of the Great Bear; but this in the *Holy Grail*, 683, is called "Arthur's Table Round,"

> "For, brother, so one night, because they roll
> Thro' such a round in heaven, we named the stars"

"Arthur's Harp" is again mentioned in the *Last Tournament*, 331:—

> "'Dost thou know the star
> [illegible] ing
> [illegible]"

From this it would seem rather to be a single star than a constellation, and perhaps the star referred to is "Vega," the brightest in the constellation of the Lyre

summer-wan, pale because in Northern countries the summer nights are less dark than those of winter.

1282 **In counter motion to the stars**, because as the clouds drive over the stars, these seem to have a motion contrary to that of the clouds

1284. **A star shot etc** Gareth is represented as susceptible to the influences of external nature The rushing of the torrent and the fall of the pine tree had suggested to him thoughts connected with his own life before he left his home, and so here the shooting of the star and the whooping of the owl are omens to him of his coming victory. To a less sanguine temperament they might have seemed presage of defeat.

1285. **pealing**, i e sounding a blast on the trumpet to celebrate victory.

1292. ***wonders ye have done etc.*** In the short broken sentences is expressed the eager anxiety of the damsel, who no longer conceals the great personal interest which she takes in her knight.

1293. **flung**, "overthrown," used as a metaphor from wrestling.

1296. **nor or**, for "neither nor."

1298. **appal** (from Old French, *appalir*) means originally "grow pale," then "make pale," "frighten."

1304. **still**, "ever": cp. l. 1218.

1314. **All the devisings etc.**, *i.e.* all the devices used by knights in dealing with a superior antagonist.

1318. **fineness**, *i.e.* "clever management," what we commonly call "finesse."

Instant, "urgent," Lat. *instare* "to urge."

1324. **palling**, "covering as) with a cloak)," from Latin *pallium* "cloak."

1325. **palfrey**, French *palefroi*, from Low Latin *paraverēdus* (*paravredus*, *parafredus*, hence German *pferd*), an "extra post-horse," *verēdus* meaning "post-horse." Thence it comes to mean a riding-horse, especially for ladies (not a war-horse). (Skeat, *Etym. Dict.*)

1330. **Sunder the glooming crimson on the marge**, *i.e.* cleave the dark crimson light of dawn on the horizon; the pavilion being seen as a mountain peak against it.

1331. **Black, with black banner etc.** "Then they came to a black lawn, and there was a black hawthorn and thereon hung a black banner, and on the other side there hung a black shield etc." *Morte Darthur*, 7, 6 (but in the romance the encounter with this black knight takes place earlier).

1335. **Echo'd the walls; a light twinkled etc.** The broken succession of the sentences and the trochaic rhythm of "Echo'd" and "twinkled" give the effect of abruptness and startling effect in the occurrences: cp. l. 234 f.

1341. **waving to him etc.** "And the lady Liones made courtesy to him down to the earth, with holding up both their hands." *Morte Darthur*, 7, 16.

1345. **that which housed therein.** The indefinite form of the expression is in harmony with the mysterious horror which we are intended to feel.

1347. **barren ribs**, i.e. "bare ribs"; so in *Lancelot and Elaine*, 160, "the barren-beaten thoroughfare." The breast-bone and ribs of a skeleton are painted upon his armour, and his helmet is surmounted by a skull for a crest. The expression "ribs of Death" is perhaps a reminiscence of Milton, *Comus*, 562,

"strains that might create a soul
Under the ribs of death."

The "fleshless laughter" of the next line is the grinning of the fleshless skull.

1355. **Trick thyself out**: "trick out" means "adorn," from the substantive "trick," which means "contrivance," and thence "toy," "trifle" etc Originally the word means "stroke" or "line." (Skeat, *Ety Dict.*)

1357. **mantling**, *i e.* "thickly covering" as with a mantle.

1362 **prickled**, his hair standing on end with horror: cp *Maud*, 14, 35 —

> "Felt a horror over me creep,
> Prickle my skin and catch my breath"

1364 **aghast**, "horror-struck" more properly "agast," for "agasted," from the Old English *agasten*, "terrify": cp. Chaucer, *Knightes Tale*, 1563 .—

> "Of which Arcita somewhat hym agaste,"

(*i e* "was somewhat terrified")

1367 **blink** means properly "glance" with the eyes, "wink," hence "flinch from," as the eyes by winking flinch from a blow.

1386 Cp *Lancelot and Elaine*, 411,—"But when the next day broke from underground"

1391 **large**, *i e* "unrestrained"; so we speak of a person being "at large," meaning at liberty, and to "enlarge" in older English is to "set free"

lived, *i e* "prevailed" cp *Princess*, I, 5,

> "There lived an ancient legend in our house"

won the quest, "achieved the adventure" cp *note on* l. 535.

1392 "He that told the tale in older times" is Malory in the *Morte Darthur*; "he that told it later" is the poet himself, who feels probably that the appearance of the lady Lyonors in his tale is too shadowy to warrant a marriage with the hero She plays a more prominent part, however, in the original story, and other events occur before Gareth becomes her accepted lover For the manner in which the poet here refers to himself, cp. *Geraint and Enid*, 161 ff —

> "as he that tells the tale
> [illegible]

In the *Coming of Arthur*, 96, a similar expression occurs probably in the same sense, but in *Pelleas and Ettarre*, 452 —

> "And he that tells the tale
> Says that her ever veering fancy turn'd
> To Pelleas,"

refers to the original story in *Morte Darthur*, 4, 22. Another example occurs in the *Last Tournament*, 226 ff. :—

"for he that tells the tale
Liken'd them, saying, as when an hour of cold
Falls on the mountain in midsummer snows,
And all the purple slopes of mountain flowers
Pass under white, till the warm hour returns
With veer of wind, and all are flowers again ;
So dame and damsel" etc.,

but this simile is very much in Tennyson's own style, one of those peculiar scenes which he treasures up after once having seen them, and loves to transfer to his verse: cp. notes on ll. 380 and 1172.

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